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Sprint Review and Retrospective

The team was made up of the Product Owner, the Scrum Master, the Developers, and the Tester. Each of these was vital to the success of our project for SNHU Travel. First, the information was gathered from the clientele via the Product Owner. With the knowledge of what the client was asking for, the Product Owner then gathered a group of potential users. With them there, the Product Owner asked them questions about their preferences. With this information gathered it was brought back and stories were created (small portions of the project). With these stories created and ordered by importance, the team was gathered to discuss. With the Scrum Master facilitating the meeting, the developers talked about how to go about starting on the project, which stories seemed more important, etc. With the backlog ready, and stories created, the team set about working on the code. During the daily meeting, the team talked about successes as well as things that were hindering their progress. With the aid of the Scrum Master, these issues were alleviated and work on the sprint continued. During development, the Tester worked closed with the developers, which greatly helped them to understand the program and how he/she could create a test to make sure it was producing expected results. When word came of a rework to the program, the team was gathered and were able to share their thoughts and concerns. From there, with the team together and on the same page again, the rework was completed, and the program was done (or our definition of done).

The user stories are requirements from the client: reordering the list of vacation spots, list vs. slideshow, price scaling, color, font and layout. And each of these is ordered by importance. Something like an ordered Top Five list on the user’s profile is more important than the color of some viewable page. From there, the ordered stories are disseminated to the team. Working in smaller groups, each story is slowly developed over the pre-selected length of the sprint. Each day the teams meet with each other and the Scrum Master and talk about what they did yesterday, will do today, and something that is impeding their work. The Scrum master helps ease these issues, and the day go on, where the teams continue work on the stories. This is repeated each day, support is offered, new ideas gained from the meetings, and the team is unified by the constant interaction. Many times, the sprint comes and goes, the teams meet for their final retrospective, take what they’ve learned and move on to the next sprint, where new stories await. But sometimes, as was the case with SNHU Travel, something comes down the pipe, a re-work of some type, and the team must pull together to think up a new plan on the fly. If anything is to be learned from Scrum-agile, it’s that flexibility to a tool of the utmost importance.

As I’ve stated before, when the project for SNHU Travel was interrupted with new requirements by the client, there was a moment when the tensions started to rise. Having most of the coding done for the project, a list that showed top five locations, hearing about this new requirement was a gut punch. We were worried that we’d have had to start over from scratch. But during the daily meeting, where the Scrum Master allowed us time to speak and then listen to other team member’s worries, we were comforted by knowing that we were going to be able to use existing code, reworking it to fit the new requirements. With Scrum-agile, the team was brought together so that everyone was on the same page, allowing us to move forward, but also so that we could allay of worries and fears, and the misconceptions of what was being asked of us. Had these daily meetings not been around, I struggle to imagine how we would have gotten through the issue as fast and diligently as we did.

From a sample letter to the product owner:

TO: Product Owner

Subject: User Story Clarifications

Dear, Product Owner,

Hello,

I’ve been looking through your user stories to create tests to see if they pass or fail, and I have a few questions about each that will hopefully clear up some of my uncertainty:

**I start the letter by stating who it is to, the subject, and then begin state my point. In this way, the product owner can be aware of where I am having my issues, as well as harbor an open line of communication. By creating a straightforward and concise initial paragraph to my email, I set the tone for how it will go from there, creating a better relationship between me and the product owner.**

A sample letter to the product owner and tester

To: Product Owner; Tester,

Subject: Clarifications on new plan

Hello all,

I am writing to gain a little more clarity on the new plan we are implementing. I understand we are going for a new approach with SNHU Travel, focusing more on health and wellness rather than a broader range of vacation spots. To continue with development of the code, I need a few clarifications.

**I state in the subject line what I am needing. From there, I explain what I mean in a straightforward way, calmly, and in a way that comes off professional. In this way I am building better relationships with my co-workers, showing that I respect them, and in return, want their respect as well.**

During each sprint, after the initial meeting to start things off, the team worked well together, for many reasons, but mostly because of the use the Kanban board, which we utilized through Azure. This not only kept us up to date with how our own parts of the project were going, but it also gave us an insight into the rest of the team as well. And every day after our daily meetings we were able to review the board, add to it, write a post, add comments, etc., which helped us get the most out of the development stage. And with the pace with which we had to work at during the developmental stage, we really took to the heart the principle of Go Fast but Never Hurry. Which basically means be nimble, adaptable and speedy so that we can learn from what we do. Also, we leaned heavily on the idea that we can’t get everything right up front, that it is, and will always be, a learning opportunity.

The scrum-agile approach, regarding our project with SHNU Travel, worked, in my opinion, very well. Some pros would be that it fostered communication, all the way from the client and future users to the developers and testers. When the work began, we were all on the same page. It allowed us to work through, and learn from, our mistakes by daily meetings and trial by error. As for whether scrum-agile was the best fit for this project, I’d say it was. Waterfall technique is typically used in projects when the details, technology and so on are well-known upfront. Typically, waterfall is best for simple, straightforward projects. If changes are made to a project during the development, it is saved until the project has been completed. Waterfall is a downhill method; it starts and doesn’t stop until the end. So, when the needs changed in the middle of the project with SNHU Travel, with agile we were able to switch gears and re-code. That would have been nearly impossible with waterfall.