SNHU Travel Project Sprint Retrospective

During this project, it was key to make the transition into an agile workflow as smooth as possible and not a pain point in the process of completing the work items and communication amount each of the team members. The various team members on our development project were extremely critical in ensuring that this was the case. For example, the email correspondence for our tester, the tester’s diligence on creating the test cases and the solution owner grooming the stories to create accurate requirements for the developers to ensure the application’s development went by the client’s expectations, and the reactions of the developer to the clients requested changes were the perfect attitude required to achieve success. The close working relationship of the tester and developer allowed for flawless code to be submitted for review as well. As Scrum Master, it was key to facilitate interactions between our team and during standups and ceremonies so that no questions lingered, and the cohesion of the team is heavily influenced based on the success or failure of these important ceremonies.

During our sprints, the approach to the Software Development Lifecycle using agile methods improved the pace in which our team was able to complete user stories and removed any form of bottlenecking during our workloads. For example, Fixes to the SNHU Travel app from a list format to a Slideshow format, would have derailed the line of work in a waterfall workflow, but with agile the change was streamlined, took precedent and testing was done as soon as the story was completed and documented with a user story and the respective test case.

The examples I have used thus far include plain business requirements getting turned into stories and test cases, as well as major changes in the project that were handled smoothly by all parts of the team and completed to satisfy the stakeholder. Since the project is using a scrum / agile approach, changes to the project are possible, not only due to amazing team members, but also because of the various agile ceremonies that allow transparency in the team when changes are required and the entire team needs to be on the same page, something that waterfall projects do not have at their disposal.

In our daily standups, communication was key, being open about challenges and the issues the team may face, or just concerns about the workload are relevant topics to generate a level of comfortability in the team and trust in each other’s work. Opening threads of discussion about what blockers each team member may have or requesting clarity on a user story or a test case for a team member to understand what is required of them or even what the scope of the work item is, are good examples of communication between team members that define a successful agile project. Moreover, group communication in the Sprint Planning and Backlog Grooming ceremonies is highly critical for a higher level of engagement so that every team member can have a thorough understanding of the business rules and prioritization of features.

In an agile project, especially a new one, using the correct organizational tool is critical for a team to adjust to the agile workflow and get a visual representation of how information and tasks will be organized, and effectively see metrics that define the level of success and efficiency that the team is having. For purposes of this project in which most of the team were just beginning, the JIRA agile workflow tool played a critical role in involving all team members with the agile process and allowed the organization of ideas and stories in a way that engaged the entire team and made the Agile ceremonies more streamlined and more organized being able to have a visual representation for most things. Using practices like story pointing, and defect triaging, we used JIRA to track these artifacts to their corresponding stories which made it clear to the team of the work expectations of each story. This made the scrum event Sprint Planning especially effective as well as Backlog grooming, which was easily organized using JIRE to visualize the Backlog for the whole team and made organizing it a dream.

Throughout this project, it was clear that using a Scrum-agile approach was the best decision to get this project moving in the right direction. A lot of the challenges the Scrum-agile team faced during the sprint would have taken double the time and effort if a waterfall method were used. Although there were may positives to this approach the negatives mostly included managing responsibility in attendance to scrum events and getting serious from all team members without requesting it. The pros, certainly outweighed the cons. In terms of whether this approach was best for the project in comparison to a waterfall workflow. There is no debate that the Scrum-agile workflow was the best possible choice for this new development project.