D.D. Sessions

Southern New Hampshire University

CS-250 Software Development Lifecycle

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Sprint Review & Retrospective

Recently, ChadaTech considered adapting an agile methodology that uses the Scrum framework for all its development teams. This approach is about having a cross-functional and collaborative team. Our team was chosen to pilot this process as we worked on the SNHU Travel application. We have successfully completed the Sprint, and now we will discuss the Sprint Review and Retrospective.

To begin, it is important to point out how the various roles on our Scrum-agile team contributed to the success of this project. Our team was made up of the Scrum Master (myself), Product Owner, Tester, and Developer. As the Scrum Master, I facilitated the team during the development of the SNHU Travel application by executing Scrum events. We started off with a Sprint planning meeting and collaborated on the highest-priority tasks to define our Sprint goal. The team attended daily Scrum meetings to track the progress of our goal. We held a backlog refinement meeting to prioritize the backlogged tasks. Lastly, we had our Sprint review and retrospective to showcase the completed product and discuss achievements from this Sprint as well as what areas could be improved upon. In addition to facilitating meetings, it was my duty to create a team charter to set expectations and responsibilities for the team, consider risks during the project, and apply effective communication strategies to set the team up for success. The Product Owner worked with our client to make product decisions about features and capabilities, directed the team on what needed to be built, prioritized tasks, and managed product backlog. She interviewed clients in a focus group session and asked them what tools and offerings they would like to see in the product. This feedback allowed her to create helpful user stories that identified requests or requirements of the software and prioritize them based on business needs. Our Tester was able to provide a different perspective on the code by writing test cases based on the user stories. He gathered initial thoughts on what inputs would be utilized as well as what results were expected of the software. Because the agile methodology promotes collaborative communication, he emailed the Product Owner when he needed to ask clarifying questions to ensure the software passed all test cases. The Developer was responsible for delivering a releasable product to the client. She had to collaborate with the Product Owner and Tester by getting explanations on user requirements and test case scenarios. The agile approach allowed her to break the project down into more manageable segments which helped establish realistic estimations and move more tasks to “Done.” The development team was able to address impediments and implement changes to the code throughout the Sprint.

The Scrum-agile approach to the software development lifecycle helped each of the user stories come to completion by promoting teamwork and embracing change. Scrum uses Sprints to break down the user stories into smaller pieces that are to be completed in a shorter period of time. Initially, the client wanted a slideshow displaying the “Top Five Destinations.” After meeting with management, the Product Owner informed the team that the client wanted to change the destinations to focus on detox and wellness locations. Our team was able to make changes to the code and create a functional slideshow of detox/wellness travel destinations during this Sprint. If we were still using the waterfall approach, the project would have been scrapped, and the team would have had to start over from the beginning.

Communication is one of the most important aspects of the agile approach to software development. Information distribution is more open and transparent within a Scrum team. Because changes happen frequently throughout a project, it is essential to support a collaborative relationship amongst the team. I was able to incorporate different practices for communicating with our team during this Sprint including an information radiator, face-to-face communication, and having a strategy for distributed team members. The most effective communication practice for our team was the daily standup meeting. These 15-minute meetings gave each team member a moment to discuss current tasks as well as answer three primary questions: What did you do yesterday? What are you going to do today? Do you have any impediments? Standups allowed the team to adapt quickly to changes that came up during the Sprint, stay focused on prioritized tasks, promote accountability, and celebrate accomplishments.

Some of the organizational tools and Scrum-agile principles that helped our team succeed were Scrum events, user stories, and Jira. Jira is a project tracking software used by agile teams to create roadmaps for tasks, powerful scrum or kanban boards, and reports and insights. This software displayed a visual of the user story tasks and constituted faster building environments that kept the team focused on producing a functional product for the client. It was helpful to have this visual tool during the daily standups to see how the team was progressing toward our Sprint goal.

Overall, I would say that the SNHU Travel application would not have been a success without the Scrum-agile framework. The frequent changes that occurred would have easily derailed the project and the deadline under the waterfall methodology. Because we adopted the agile processes for this project, we were able to discuss necessary changes and implement a plan to stay on pace to achieve our Sprint goal. Scrum is simple, adaptable, transparent, flexible, and focused. We were able to deliver a higher-quality application feature in a faster turnaround time. Frequent meetings could be considered a con to the Scrum approach, but they truly worked in our favor to keep the entire team on track and to ensure each person understood the work that needed to be done.

References

Cobb, C. (2015). *The Project Manager's Guide to Mastering Agile : Principles and Practices for an Adaptive Approach.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc.