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Retrospective

Throughout my experience as the Scrum Master of the SNHU Travel project, I can confidently say that the agile approach has not only transformed the development process but has fostered an environment of flexibility, collaboration, and continuous improvement within our team. In this retrospective, I will be highlighting the accomplishments, obstacles, and lessons learned from our journey. Our team consisted of me, the Scrum Master, alongside a product owner, developer, and a tester. Each member has made their own significant contributions to the project's success and as well as formed a great team.

As the scrum master, I served as the leader of the team and ensured that the project was adhering to agile principles. I help address the needs of team members, end users, and the SNHU Travel agency. A key responsibility I had was to lead meetings such as the Daily Scrum. The Daily scrums I facilitated played a crucial role in communication and collaboration by giving the team space to communicate their ideas, accomplishments, and concerns about the project. The product owner also played a crucial role in the development process and addressing end user needs and oversaw facilitating User Stories. The User stories of the SNHU Travel Project have contributed to the implementation of features such as the ability to customize your own preferences such as price limit range or vacation types. Because this feedback came directly from user input, it is a step in guaranteeing that the project aligns with user requirements. Leveraging user stories also provided valuable insights on user requirements to efficiently strategize and plan the project and make informed decisions. User Stories have also been helpful to the tester who also brought value to the team. The tester was in charge of leveraging insights from user stories to prioritize with features in testing need the most prioritization. The tester also addressed gaps in the user stories such as informing the product owner on their concerns of unclear end user expectations. His awareness could have helped the team avoid any negative scenarios and downfalls and negative feedback from end users.

The agile approach places importance on the end user and providing them with value and quality. Understanding the needs of the user helps us understand the project requirements and our goals. We used user stories to gain insights on user requirements and source valuable feedback on our SNHU Travel website. The agile approach has helped user stories come to a completion by valuing collaboration and face to face communication with team members and the users. The product owner, developer and tester worked together to bring user stories to life. Collaboration was also not limited to the team members; the users worked closely on sharing their ideas on what features they would like to see on the website which helped ensure more accurate user expectations. Another agile approach that contributed to the completion of user stories was continuous improvement. Gathering feedback and input from the focus group gave the team an opportunity to learn from it and use it to enhance the development process and project. This encouraged the team to learn how to adjust to the changing requirements of the users. The agile approach of flexibility also supports the project to completion when user stories and test cases needed to be revised. In our experience, although the user stories were deemed completed our tester voiced his concerns on unclear test cases. Through close communication and collaboration, we were able to revise the test cases to ensure our product accurately aligns with user expectations and its intended functionality.

Utilizing the agile approach is not limited to providing flexibility in the development process, but it allowed us to embrace different means of communication. Having a variety of communication channels has equipped us with an efficient way of collaboration and has helped enhance the development process. A communication channel we utilized that proved to be effective in collaboration was email. An example of how email encouraged collaboration in our team was when the tester was seeking clarification on user stories for test cases. The flexibility of the email formats gives the product owner, who was in charge of user stories, the convenience to respond to his message in order to accommodate her busy schedule. Email also provides a way of documenting communication and can be used as a reference. That way when our product responded to our testers email with clarification details, the tester was able have a record to look back on when needed. Finally, a collaboration was efficiently embraced collaboration was face to face communication. Face to face communication helped us build rapport with our end users while conducting our focus group. Having a face-to-face focus group allowed the end users to build trust and connection with our team and the SNHU Travel agency and they comfortable with sharing their thoughts on what would they like to see on the SNHU Travel website. It gave a collaborative atmosphere for not only the team but for the end user as well.

The success of our team is thanks to Agile organizational tools and implementing Agile principles. One of the key agile organization tools we utilized was the Daily Stand up where we gathered to discuss our progress, accomplishments, and any roadblocks we encountered during the project. By regularly communicating our progress, the team became more accountable for their work and increases the need for responsibility of their tasks. The Daily Stand Up also became a quick problem-solver by giving our team the platform to communicate the challenges they faced and collectively find solutions. This ensured that roadblocks were resolved quickly and prevented delays during the project. Another tool we utilized was JIRA, which served as a visual of the team's work progress. It allowed us to track our progress and thus further held us accountable for our tasks. JIRA also aligns with the Agile principle of "measuring work progress". The success of our team can also be attributed to the Agile principle of "flexibility” and “adapting to changing requirements”. We experienced a sudden change in client requirements when an industry report revealed that detox/wellness vacations will soon be a popular vacation category. Although our team had concerns about the potential of their work progress being scrapped and time restraints, our product owner and I assured them the work just needs to be adjusted. Our team quickly acknowledged commitment and collaborated on what can be achieved with the given circumstances and timeline. This allowed our team to embrace change and take initiative on the sudden change in requirements.

To conclude this retrospective, I will be assessing the effectiveness of the Agile approach has on the Agile project. It places emphasis on flexibility and allowed us to quickly take the initiative on the client's changing requirements. We engaged in effective communication, whether it was face to face or virtual, and it facilitates collaboration and transparency within the team. We utilized user stories to adhere to a user-centric approach to understand user requirements. This also facilitated continuous improvement where we were regularly seeking feedback and input from users which gave us the opportunity to learn and enhance the development process. However, the Agile approach did have its challenges such as potential time constraints. The sudden change in client requirements did not give us the time to estimate completion time. While the team successfully adapted, this caused delays in the development process and challenges in meeting deadlines. Given the accomplishments and the success of our team, it is apparent the Scrum-agile approach was effective for the SNHU Travel project. Though we were faced with certain roadblocks, it equipped us with valuable benefits such as adaptability, efficient collaboration and communication, continuous improvement, and a user-centric approach.