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CS 250

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Sprint Review and Retrospective

In the SNHU Travel project Hovixen Gale the project owner met with the previous users of our travel system that we had not seen in some time and queried them on what new features they would like to see in our new system. From their input he put together a product backlog of user stories, that the tester Aidmen Gahr was able to generate acceptance criteria from the user story details. This allowed the development team sound testing to pass or fail the developed software from. Elflord Bane the Scrum Master facilitated all the meetings and keeping them focused and facilitating correct communication between the stakeholders and the team. When there was a deviation off topic in the Daily Scrum he suggested a sidebar topic list. Later when the theme was changed from top five destinations in slide show format to detox/wellness vacations as a priority he asked if there would be more time allocated for this shift in theme. Larry Arndt the developer did the programming from the user stories and delivered all the software requirements. He shifted from the top five destinations slide show midstream and developed the detox/wellness slide show in its place.

It was really all the Scrum-agile approach that helped each of the user stories come to completion. The interviews that the product owner held with the customers was a great development tool that shows we want to focus on how individuals want to interact with our systems. It was key to writing the user stories in the correct format, which in agile lends to all the other functionality. For example: When the user story is in the format saying what the user <type> … wants to <perform some task>… so that they can < achieve some goal> it guides to the further development. In the agile framework it creates customer collaboration and leads to the development of working software. With the top five destinations application, the user wanted to be able to click a link to see the top five destinations available. The product owner, Hovixen was able to pull this out of the meeting with the users sent by the client and develop the user story and the acceptance criteria for the story. Aidmen drew up the inputs and expected results from that for testing and Larry coded the initial list formatting top five destinations that was later agilely changed to a slide show. It was done quickly and to specification with the Scrum-agile approach.

That was one of the interruptions. It was to change from doing the top five destinations in a listing format and switching to a slide show format. The coding hade to shift from a window that had information that scrolled down into a window with previous and next buttons to advance the vacation content. In addition, the amount of data the user would receive is quite different. In the listing the user can see several of the vacations in the list at one time with a scroll down function to see the rest of the listing, whereas the slide show focuses the customer on one vacation at a time. The shift seemed a little peculiar do to the change of the functionality, it seems if you are going to have the slide show type listing you might just have all the trip information and an offer to buy that trip as the slide is akin to a whole page ad for that trip. Henceforth, came another agile switch just as perplexing to modify the top five slide show to the Detox/Wellness theme. So, it seems the direction could be said to have shifted twice, and I would have the same feed back from Larry the programmer: why not make these whole page sell ads with the whole of the vacation data on them. The other one addition was that the ordering was removed as it was not clear that there was a number “one” detox/wellness vacation. This agile twist was received with a grain of salt as there was no production time added to produce it and it seemed like more work for the same pay.

In the midst there were several communications, some of the most effective were the in-person meetings. Hovixen was very clear in telling the team what the direction of the project was going to be, in an abstract manner. He said that, “we were shifting to detox/wellness vacations” and we clearly did and so that was very effective. However, some of the email communications for clarifications should not be overlooked. Aidmen, the tester, wrote to Hovixen, our product owner for clarification on many of the user stories. He asked him about how the user rating system should be implemented for user story four, and if we wanted sorting by price done at all with user story three. Also, Larry our developer wrote both Aidmen and Hovixen about his concerns with the way the detox/wellness vacations were launching in slide show format and how he thought it was more practical in a listing format. It seemed the team spoke with each other on a regular basis and reached out to the other team members when further collaboration was needed and even perhaps in a few cases encouraged it.

It seemed that the main Scrum-agile principles that helped our team be successful were that the team had face to face conversations which were most useful at conveying information and we used working software as our primary measure of progress. We held in person meetings when there was to be a shift in direction and of coarse at all the Sprint and Scrum functionalities. The product owner and scrum master also met face to face with the client and the product owner with the user base. All this face to face interaction lent to the team being on the same page with one another and everyone knew not only what they were supposed to be doing but also what the other members of the team were focusing on, it was not the only form of communication used but it built a great team cohesion. With the user stories and the testing criteria being developed concurrently the development of “done” software is much more efficient. As Larry and Eric were given coding tasks Aidmen would make sure that the inputs would generate the expected results. This allowed use to have working software created every step of the way. This software was fully tested and “done” which lent it to being a great measure of the teams progress. It let the team show that project was being successful because value was being delivered.

It Seems the Scrum-agile approach can be very effective. I am unsure about all of the changes in direction and what they do to a project when no time is added for the development of new features. It seems that some of the concerns and questions were perhaps not able to be fully addressed and answered in this one sprint time frame that would have been able to been able to have been if there would have been multiple sprints. I think one thing is that once a sprint planning is done that the product owner is not allowed to come in and make big changes to what is going on in the sprint like what seemed to happen here with the detox/wellness change. I do think that the approach is pretty neat but it does have a learning curve. It does make it where a person has to work a lot more with people and for people like me that don’t have good people skills and that are disabled with bad people skills it seems like it flushes me out of the market. I pretty much see agile as removing me from the software development work field cause I cannot work with people like this, but for the SNHU travel project I thought it was fine and I enjoyed the coarse work. In fact I think it worked quite well for the SNHU travel project and perhaps better than the waterfall approach would have, but I understand there is a lot more coding that must go on than we are doing to build a real travel system and that in the real world the team would be working on this all day, probably five days a week, eight hours a day.