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Sprint Review and Retro

Throughout the last six weeks I have assumed each of the roles within a Scrum Team. For the given scenario, we are an agile team working on an SNHU travel product. The roles we focused on throughout the course were product owner, developers, testers, and the scrum master. Each role is imperative to the agile software development life cycle, and I was given the unique opportunity to experience each of these for a brief time.

To start I highlighted the role of Scrum Master. We were given the task of practicing communication with the product owner and development team, as well as planning future sprints. In this position it was important I take into consideration the needs of my developers as well as the needs of the consumer, communicated to me through the product owner. The Scrum Master is vital in facilitating planning meetings, reviews, and daily stand-up meetings. They keep the meetings moving and on topic and help ensure that all major points are considered and discussed. The next week I took on the role of Product Owner. The product owner maintains direct contact with the client and is responsible for communicating needs and desires of the client to the rest of the Scrum Team. During this week we observed a meeting with the clients and were made to deduce important desires and translate these desires into stories for the developers. This role is important because they need to be able to summarize the requests from the client in a way that gives the developers enough details, but also does not inundate them with information that is not necessary. If these stories are clear and concise, this puts the developers and testers in the best position for success. After my week as the product owner, I took over as the development team. Having a clear outline of what the client wanted really helped to make my tasks that week feel easier. We also got to practice communication between the developers and other team members, which is vital to the success of the agile method. Knowing how to ask questions and make requests of your teammates in a way that is respectful of them, and their time will improve the success rate of the team.

Using the agile approach for the SNHU travel site, turned out to be highly beneficial when it came to story completion. There were times when new requests were being made of all team members. When a new request is made, the backlog must be reprioritized, and the development team needs to do their best to stay within the given time frame and budget. This type of flexibility with tasks and direction is made possible with the agile method. Had we been working and following the waterfall model, we would have had to stick with the original plan, and possibly disappointing the client in the process. I will say, from the prospective of the development team, this flexibility may cause some stress. Changing direction of the project suddenly can add pressure to a team if not communicated properly to them. Therefore, I believe that agile can only be as strong and successful of a work model, as the weakest communicator on your team. It is vital that each member feels comfortable speaking up, asking questions, and feeling heard by others.

Below are two examples of emails exchanged between members of an agile team. When I am communicating through email, I prefer to be concise and polite. I want my questions to be clear, and not lost in fluff. I also want my desired recipient to know how urgent or not urgent my questions may be. This is an important line to balance when communicating in a professional setting, as it is important to build relationships, while also respecting the time of the person reading the email. I find it is best to share only the necessary information they will need to assist you in your desired fashion.

Hello \*\*Insert Developer’s Name\*\*

I am currently working on writing up some test cases for our recent stories. I see that you completed \*\*Insert Story Title Here\*\* on \*\*Insert Date\*\*. I want the instructions for our testers to be as concise as possible and was hoping you could provide me with a few more details. After our tester selects the search button, what should they expect to see on the screen? How specific in their search parameters can they be while still receiving a destination? Any other details you have that may aid me in writing these tests would be greatly appreciated. Please get back to me by the end of day tomorrow, and if you are unsure of what I am asking for let me know so I can clarify further! I really appreciate your time and attention; this story looks great so far and I think our users will be pleased!

Best,

Emily Nagorski

Scrum Master, My team’s name

Company Name

TO: Product Owner

SUBJECT: New Plan Clarification

After our meeting this afternoon, I had some time to consider the implications of this new direction and thus have a few clarification requests.

1. When will we be made aware of the reprioritization of the backlog?

2. Could you meet with the clients and get updated requests of what they would like to see from this new direction?

3. Do we have the budget for overtime costs, if necessary, to maintain the desired time service?

I know you are just as busy with this change in direction as we are, so I will be sure to follow up with you on Thursday regarding these questions, and any others that may come up between now and then! Thank you for working on the reprioritization, this new direction seems intriguing.

Emily Nagorski

Junior Developer

\*\*Company Name\*\*

My overall takeaway from this course is that Agile can be anything you want it to be, and typically it's different for every team. It is important to try practices within agile to find what works best for your group of employees. The one thing that ties all agile teams together is the necessity for productive, and respectful communication. This is important for every role, and every interaction throughout the process, whether you are the product owner meeting with a client, or a scrum master leading a daily stand-up. Without communication, agile would not be as successful of a model.