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 Software Development Lifecycle  
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Sprint Review and Retrospective

Recently, our team was chosen to pilot the agile process and evaluate whether, our company Chada Tech, would like to work the Scrum-agile approach into more of our teams and departments. We have been given the task of developing SNHU Travel, a website that will assist our customer base find vacation destinations that specialize in wellness. This document will help us recap what happened during this project and highlight any processes or failures that our team may want to emphasize for future projects and help out team become more adept and either avoiding these issues in the future or highlighting procedures we would like to implement in further projects and improve upon.

Our first task with the new project and process was to implement the team that would take care of this. The Scrum-agile team is typically made up of the following members: Scrum Master, Product Owner, Testers, and Developers. The Scrum Master can sort of be seen as somewhat of a Project Manager where they are doing whatever needed to assist the team. Although the team is supposed to be self-organized, the Scrum Master is an observer to make sure that all the teams are working as planned and staying on track with given goals by the stakeholders and will usually be the moderator of any Scrum events taking place. The Product Owner is responsible for working with the stakeholders and finding out what the priorities our for the team and setting clear goals for the team to work toward. The Product Owner will work very closely with the Scrum Master for setting goals and notifying the teams what the priorities are as requested by the Stakeholders. The Developers are responsible for working on these priorities and getting them completed in a timely manner to bring them all together and allow for a testable version of the product. The Testers will work on making sure that the functionality as determined by the Scrum Master and Product Owner is met and that there are no bugs. The Tester will keep logs and give any feedback to the Developers to make processes more efficient or simpler and that still meet the functional requirements. In our project, the Product Owner was able to identify the priorities from the stakeholders and really give the team an idea of what they wanted. In this case, the primary focus was on the wellness sector for vacationing and being able to find those types of places based on personal preferences. The Scrum Master held events to allow the teams to continually communicate with each other and make sure everyone was up to date on where other parts of the team are on during the project. Developers and Testers were able to work on the project and create a slideshow of top destinations as determined by the stakeholders.

The planning process for agile differs from traditional in that all the planning may not be done up front like traditional planning. In agile, user stories are identified as the primary functions that the stakeholders want, and these are what is communicated to the team by the Product Owner. From there, the team already has a direction and knows where to start. Some Scrum Events that are held like the daily standup may allow for discussions on where the team is on specific user stories depending on how large the teams are and what user stories are assigned to different members of the team. Even during these meetings, what is currently prioritized is also emphasized so if any members are blocked or unable to move forward with a user story, that team member can get help from another team member and continue to mobilize that user story to completion. With the emphasis on these different user stories day to day and organized by priority, the chance of something become left undone will decrease. In our project for SNHU Travel, our priorities were handed to the team in the form of a Product Backlog which identified which functions need to be created first. Having something like this log really can make a difference when it comes to getting teams to move on an assignment. Possibly something about being written down and concrete makes it a bit more real rather than something just talked about in passing. Other items can be added to be sure the team is correctly working on identified priorities and may help with identifying areas where team members may need to be shifted due to possible specializations or experience that may better align with different functionalities.

As mentioned before, with less planning being done up front, this leaves space for flexibility. The Scrum-agile approach accounts for possible changes with less planning being done up front so if a pivot is needed, it can be done so smoothly and quickly. For example, in traditional methods, testing and approval by the stakeholders may not have been done until a point in time where the program was fully complete. In a Scrum-agile approach method, transparency is key with stakeholders and continual meetings with them along with updates allows for current progress on a project to be tracked by everyone involved with the project. If any change is required, it can be implemented in the middle of development rather than at the end. In our project, the stakeholders originally just wanted a travel application that can identify some places based on price and personal preferences. Stakeholders later realized that a new and upcoming trend is wellness vacations where customers can go and focus on physical and mental wellness as a vacation. We were able to receive this information way before completion of the project and implement that change since the stakeholders really wanted to focus on that trend. Allowing for this change to come in sooner rather than at the end likely has saved much time to correct and change the application to something that is more suited for stakeholders rather than finishing a full product and then deleting major portions of it.

Communication is key in the Scrum-agile process. During the standups at the beginning of each day to summarize what was done, what needs to be done, and any obstacles is helpful and necessary so the rest of the teams know if anything may be stalling processes. Again, this may allow people with different expertise that may be able to more efficiently help the person that is stalled for whatever reason. I have worked in places before where the organization may not like when other departments talk to each other without going through proper channels. With this kind of organization, multiple people are able to keep tabs on current projects. During the SNHU Travel project, we had daily standup meetings to help coordinate this cross-talk between user stories. Face-to-Face interactions are generally preferred in order to answer any follow-up questions that may occur but we have also used email, video chat and other forms of communication when needed. Other items like the information radiator is great for transparency among the team in order to track where others are at in their assignments. Depending on the size of the team, there are different ways to use information radiator. Since ours was a small-scale pilot, we were able to use a white board with post it’s to track the progress of team projects. Updates with the stakeholders were also key since they are the ones that influence the product log and the priorities in which decisions are made.

Along with information radiators, there are different tools that may help organize projects using the Scrum-agile method. There are many companies that have created project tracking software and we have used something similar to Asana to help track assignments and changes for everyone to see, including the stakeholders. From a Scrum standpoint, the Scrum Master may be able to continually update this project management software so the whole team is continually updated with different parts of the project but also being able to manage something such as their dashboard to help them focus a bit more. When there is a lot of cross-collaboration, software such as this will allow collaborators to view on which portions of the project they may need to work with someone else or making sure everyone is on the same page when it comes to meeting times for the daily stand up or scheduling the retrospective and allowing access to those dates and locations of all events for all collaborators.

During this project for creating the SNHU Travel applications there were some pros and cons that need to be considered before determining whether this was the best model for this specific project. Some pros that we can weigh are as follows: allowed for quick changes from the stakeholders and potentially saving time and energy, allowed for clear and concise meetings to understand stakeholder priorities, total transparency of project progress across all parts of the process, implementing quality into multiple steps of the development process, and having assignments that are listed, prioritized to the Scrum Master to be able to handout to the team, and the flexibility to implement different portions of Scrum-Agile methods since not all are always necessary. Some cons of the Scrum-agile project are as follows: all team members must be on board and self-motivated for concrete results and feedback, changes may arise with short notice so team members must be ready for them and a lot more moving parts happening then in a traditional waterfall model so more attention to different concurrent processes is necessary. In this case, Scrum-agile method was more likely the preferred method especially with the changes that were made in the middle of development which allowed for a quick small pivot to get back on track. This project is a relatively small project compared to others and both may have been possible, but the Scrum-agile method does allow for more flexibility in the process. This concludes the retrospective and sprint review, our team would recommend that our organization adopt the Scrum-agile methods into other areas of our organization.