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Cory Thoma

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Final Project

Learning Scrum through practicing by way of this project was an incredible opportunity for our team to learn about best practices. Each one of the roles (be they developers, testers, product owner or the Scrum Master) were instrumental in creating and deploying a quality product to our clientele. Carefully planning out every sprint for the team has been one of my favorite tasks as the Scrum master. If I could assist in making this a better-performing team, then I know that my work was not in vain. Perhaps one of the most important one of my responsibilities as Scrum was planning the daily meetings that were to be held every day of work on the project.

Of course, one of the most vital members of our team were the developers, without whom we could not have built a project at all. A lot of their contribution to the team was in their way of suggesting various methods of making communication more seamless. We chose to use the Teams application from Microsoft for our meetings when we just had to meet for one topic or so. Without this tool, it would have been difficult to be on the same page about things in the process.

A lot of the support for this project came from the product owner, and a major contribution of theirs was the five why’s. By using this technique, our team could more rapidly pinpoint just what our customer needed that our product was supposedly solving. In this way we could pair down stories that were less than necessary in lieu of ones that were crucial to our team’s success. One of the jobs of the product owner is to serve as a go-between for the team and the stakeholders, and our product owner did this with flying colors.

Another part of the team which quickly proved to be invaluable to our design process were the product testers. And a huge part of what they did for the team was inform us of which parts of the application worked and didn’t very soon after receiving and testing it. When it came to ascertaining what the end user wants from the app, the usage of user stories as a tool of discovery was a valuable part of the work of the testers. It also helped us figure out how to make this app run on both mobile and desktop systems.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of our process when it came to finishing the user stories effectively was using the Scrum approach and the Agile methodology. In terms of prioritizing the most crucial parts of the work, there was no better approach than to align with this framework. Especially when it came to choosing what to put time and effort into first, it was valuable. After this step, we were able to come up with a timeframe for each of the different parts. As the scope of the project evolved throughout the Scrum process, we changed things around accordingly.

Another practical thing about Agile was, well, its agility. This was especially true when things progressed in the process, and we had to change things around. Also, as the project got built, our client wanted to change things from what they initially presented to us, but since we use Agile, we were able to work with this. Even when the focus of the project changed from travel to wellness, we had the project manager meet with the client, and our team handled it beautifully. Even as soon as the next sprint we introduced the new topics to our work so that we still finished in the amount of time we had set out to do.

A big part of the project was how we communicated with each other. Some of our methods could not have been done even 10 years ago, one of which was Microsoft Teams. Through using this piece of software, we could all be at the same place for our daily scrum meetings. In so doing, we all stayed on the same page even when we were far apart physically. Of course, when we were able to meet in person we did. In my role as the Scrum master, it was vital to facilitate clear and open communication amongst the team. Everything else in Agile will benefit from observing this practice.

One of the best things about doing this project was being able to learn about and practice all the tools and Scrum-agile techniques we had been learning about in this class. Among these were sprint backlogs, burndown charts, user stories and Azure boards. Sometimes during our daily meetings, the speaker would need people to see a visual to illustrate what they were saying, and Azure boards were the tool that helped us achieve this. Sprint backlogs helped us keep everything organized for our work in the future. Burndown charts were useful to assess what we had already done and see what we still had to work on. User stories kept our team engaged with the most pressing parts of our current sprint.

We did a good job considering how unfamiliar we were with Scrum-Agile prior to taking this course. This was a much better approach to this project than waterfall. With the way the project grew and changed, it would have been much more difficult to do using the waterfall approach to development. It’s a testament to Agile’s versatility that we were able to accommodate the customer’s changing needs in this way. I know that this approach was the right way to go about doing this project, as evidenced by the effectiveness of our work as a team.