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CS250

Sprint Review and Retrospective

The various roles of the scrum team are important to the outcome of the project. Each role has responsibilities that allow the project to continue efficiently. In the instance of the SNHU Travel Project, each team member's experience showed a different part of the process and how it interacted with the rest of the team's responsibilities. Throughout the timeline of this course, I stepped into the role of various members of the scrum team, as we implemented an agile methodology to the project.

As a Product Owner, there is ownership over the project outcome. They are responsible for the expectations of the team and what the stakeholders are expecting out of the product. They manage the vision, while also monitoring progress toward the end product. The product owner for the SNHU travel project was focused on creating expectations. First meeting with a focus group of customers and transforming that feedback into user stories. The user stories act as building blocks toward the final product for the rest of the team.

The product owner serves as a “voice of the customer” for the team. By representing that liaison in the SNHU Travel project, the whole team can stay knowledgeable on what the customer wants. In response to a tester's email, the product owner clarified what the customer was looking for in the product by providing an example. By continuing to communicate with stakeholders, the product owner allows the team to practice an important principle of Agile - *Welcome changing requirements, even late in development*.

The Scrum Master is a coach, leader, and facilitator; in a project like the SNHU Travel Project, they play a part in making sure there was ample communication throughout the team. The scrum master continually facilitates and contributes to discussions for the project. They also ensure that a strict timeline is followed for the duration of each sprint. In a meeting with the development team and product owner in module five, the scrum master asked questions concerning the timeline of the project.

The structure and timeline of a project are important to its success, as this ties directly into the customer expectations of our team. The structure is important to the team as well and creating an outline of responsibilities and expectations helps create an outlook for the team. As a scrum master, I was able to create a team charter, describing the project at hand and implementing the agile practices that we would use within the project – such as the use of a scrum board, daily scrum meetings, and sprint planning before each sprint. Through continuous communication utilizing scrum meetings, collaboration stays at the forefront of the team.

Agile practices ensure there is continuous feedback for the product. Due to consistently reviewing and improving the product, the requirements can change rapidly. The tester's role during this project contributed to the flexibility of the team. When stepping into the role, I developed test cases that quickly needed to be changed to reflect new requirements. The original requirement was for a page format for vacation destinations, but the new communication from the product owner required a slideshow format. The test cases were revised to reflect the use of buttons to view the next slide. This change to the test cases allows the rest of the development team to work on user stories based on the new test cases.

The implementation of test-driven development allows the creation of code that is more modular and flexible to changes. This was demonstrated when the website shifted towards detox and wellness retreats, and the tester began reworking the existing test cases to reflect the changes. Revising test cases to reflect the new needs of the customer allows developers to write code in iterations reflecting the new requirements, with the changes being focused on functionality.

As a developer, there was an initiative to communicate with the rest of the team. When there were questions about the requirements, I was able to send an email to the product owner and tester asking for clarification on the new changes. A face-to-face scrum meeting was held to inform the team of the new focus on detox and wellness vacations. I reached out to the product owner through email as they are the bridge between the customer and the team, and asked questions about the previous iterations and how they were being tied in. A specific question was around the accessibility of all other vacations on the website, and if traditional vacations would still be available. The email was clear and concise and was purposed around being proactive towards the end goal. A successful product comes from open communication about the requirements, so communicating any questions between the team is an important aspect of an agile scrum team.

There are several tools in place to help with an agile approach. Tools like JIRA and Azure DevOps boards give teams an interactive way to track progress and manage the project. These tools can provide transparency across a team, whether it be remote or in person. Using centralized boards of information allows the team to stay knowledgeable on the tasks at hand, especially when the board can be contributed to by all members.

In a remote environment, it’s also important to continue to perform daily meetings. Typically, this is where video call tools become important such as Microsoft Teams and Slack. Fortunately, even with these virtual environments, it’s still possible to walk through the information together using virtual whiteboards and screen-sharing features. Although it’s not true in person, it’s important to communicate with the team in an effective way where information is portrayed elaborately. This is an important principle of agile as well, to convey information in face-to-face conversation.

In terms of software development, there are benefits and drawbacks to a Scrum-Agile approach. Agile methodologies, in essence, encourage a self-driven team, with the team taking ownership over their project progress. It also allows flexibility with changes, and as the customer changes requirements, it is not difficult to adapt to those changes. In the case of the SNHU travel project, we were able to split user requirements into user stories and build software in increments. The future progress is then based on feedback, always focusing on customer and team collaboration.

The Scrum-Agile approach is not always a culture fit for every company though. Some teams do not function efficiently without a well-defined leader. Agile principles expect self-leadership, and without full involvement from the team, there can be timeline issues and communication issues. Lack of predictability is also a drawback of Scrum-Agile. It’s harder to predict cost and timeline when approaching with less preparation. With a waterfall approach, long-term development plans are created at the beginning of the project. This works well with ample information in the beginning but can cause issues when changes arise throughout production.

Overall, I think the scrum-agile approach was the best method for the SNHU Travel Project. It allowed for greater flexibility toward the requirements. When it comes to designing a customer-facing website, where there is the possibility of changes over time due to customer feedback, and we experienced that throughout this project. Flexibility is where agile-scrum methodologies excel. By approaching the program in iterations, we were able to hit all requirements of the customer without causing interruption or quality issues.