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CS-250

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Sprint Review and Retrospective

Over the past six weeks, we have been working on the SNHU Travel project. Our initial goal was to launch the travel website within a five-week timeframe. This was so that the launch of the website would coincide with the time when SNHU Travel’s clients typically plan their vacation travel for the year. To expand their customer base, SNHU Travel expressed an interest in offering trendy, niche vacation packages. To complete this goal, we were then tasked with implementing a booking system. Our team, using an Agile approach with a Scrum framework, consisted of a Scrum Master, Product Owner, Developer, and Tester. Despite encountering many challenges throughout the development process, our adherence to the Scrum-Agile methodology enabled us to effectively navigate these obstacles and adhere to our sprint timeline.

Each role within our team played an important part in making the SNHU Travel project a success. The Scrum Master established our Agile team charter that included the value to attain, results to accomplish, our project team roster, success criteria for the project, key project risks, values and principles to be held throughout development, and the scrum events and rules we would incorporate in our sprint. In addition to this, the Scrum Master helped schedule Scrum events such as sprint planning, daily scrum, and the sprint review and retrospective and helped keep the events within their timebox. The Product Owner provided invaluable direction to the team on the product, prioritized the tasks to be completed and made sure that the product was aligned to SNHU Travel’s goals and the user’s needs and expectations. The Product Owner also held a focus group with several of SNHU Travel's top customers to gain insights into the features that they valued most. The feedback that was gained from this focus group was immensely helpful in creating the user stories that ensured the features we developed were of utmost value to the users. These user stories also provided clear acceptance criteria for each feature, which served as an excellent guide for the developers and testers. The developers initially created a booking system for the website, but then there was a shift in the project’s focus. The developers then had to deal with the challenge of adjusting their work to meet the new requirements. Thanks to the iterative development approach promoted by Agile, the developers were then able to carry forward most of the existing code and only had to make minor adjustments. The testers created their initial test cases to verify the features functioned as intended but had to deal with the same challenge as the developers. When the project’s requirements changed, they had to adapt their test cases to test the new features and make sure that the acceptance criteria were up to date. With Agile, this flexibility in testing ensured that the final product met everyone’s needs and requirements. In essence, the combination of clearly defined roles, effective application of the Scrum-Agile principles and events, and the ability to adapt to changes ensured the successful completion of the SNHU Travel project.

The Scrum-agile SDLC approach was also a huge help to successfully implementing our user stories. The agile SDLC is composed of the planning stage, implementation stage, review stage, and retrospective stage. During planning the requirements are decided, the sprint timeline is established, initial user stories are created, and the product backlog is established. By creating our user stories this early in the process, it ensures that each software feature developed takes into consideration the user’s perspective. This approach helps the team keep in mind the value that they are aiming to bring to the user when they are creating the feature. Another benefit is that user stories give the team an idea of the estimated effort that will be required to implement the feature. This helps the team deliver high quality work because they will be able to estimate if the feature will be able to be completed during the established timeline. Another aspect of the Scrum-agile SDLC approach that helps successfully complete the user stories is iterative development. During the implementation stage, the user stories are then broken down into tasks that will be completed during the sprint. Each sprint focuses on a few user stories, which allow the team to focus on the features being created. Using sprints also provides flexibility and adaptability if a user story must be adjusted due to changes in requirements (which happened during the SNHU Travel project), then the change can be incorporated into the current sprint or planned for the next sprint. Finally, the review stage is where a lot of the feedback and improvements are made. Various scrum events take place in this stage depending on what part of the sprint we are working on. If the sprint is still ongoing, feedback and adjustments are discussed during the daily scrum and then incorporated into the implementation stage. Thanks to the ability to move back and forth between these stages, then the user stories are kept updated and aligned with the needs of SNHU Travel and their customers. At the end of a sprint, the sprint review and retrospective take place. Feedback and improvements from these events are incorporated into the next sprint, marking the beginning of a new cycle.

By leveraging a Scrum-agile approach, our team was able to quickly adapt to market trends. When an industry report indicated a growing popularity in detox/wellness vacation packages, we had to make changes to the features we were working on. Thanks to the iterative nature of a Scrum-agile approach, we were able to keep most of our existing code and only had to make minor changes. This flexibility allowed our team to respond to the change and incorporate the new requirements without significant disruption to our sprint timeline.

Given these changes in project requirements, I found myself with a few questions regarding the new features. As the tester at this time, I felt that it would be best to reach out to the product owner via email to obtain the necessary information to proceed with my testing. The following sample email is what I would have sent to start a conversation that would help me gather the information I needed to make sure that my test cases were accurate.

Subject: Request for Clarification on Website Layout and User Features

Dear Christy,

As we continue to test the SNHU Travel software, I’ve come across a few areas where I could use some additional clarification.

I would appreciate more information about the layout of the website. While writing my test cases, I made some assumptions about the location of certain features, such as the profile settings option. However, I realized that my assumptions might not align with the actual design. Could you provide more details or perhaps a mockup of the website layout?

Additionally, I believe that gaining more insights from our users could greatly benefit our testing process. Understanding their perspective and how they interact with our software would allow us to create more effective and relevant test cases. Would it be possible to conduct surveys or interviews with some of our users to gather this information?

Thank you for considering these requests. Your guidance and clarification would be much appreciated in helping us make sure that our software meets the needs and expectations of our users.

Best regards,

Ivette

For the SNHU Travel project, we used user stories and a Scrum board as organizational tools. User stories served as a constant reminder for the team to keep the user’s needs in focus during software development, which was a very useful tool during daily scrums and the sprint review and retrospective. User stories were also very useful to measure progress and identify areas for improvement. Another essential organizational tool we used was the Scrum board. The Scrum board was used during the daily Scrum to make sure that all tasks were on track to be completed. The Scrum board would also provide a visual representation of the progress being made. In hindsight, using a tool like JIRA would have been very beneficial. It would have provided an easily accessible and referenceable Scrum board, which would enhance our efficiency and productivity.

In the context of this project, the pros of a Scrum-agile approach were quick delivery, adaptability, user-centric features, and continuous improvement. Cons however were changes in scope, being dependent on participation and communication and collaboration, and not producing much documentation. I have talked about these pros earlier in this retrospective so now I will focus more on the cons. By allowing for changes in requirements, it can become very easy to just keep adding and adding to the project, which would be disastrous. Additionally, depending on participation, communication, and collaboration between team members, stakeholders, and clients could mean delays due to waiting for responses and there are more chances for miscommunication that will take time to clear up. Another con is that not much documentation was produced. While too much documentation can certainly be a problem, I think that the opposite is true as well. It will be more difficult when looking back at this project further in the future. But despite these cons, the Scrum-agile approach we used for the SNHU Travel project was indeed the correct choice. It allowed us to incorporate changes without compromising the timeline or the quality of the product. The Agile SDLC allowed us to go back and forth between the implementation stage and the review stage so we could continuously improve our work and deliver working code frequently. The Scrum framework used together with Agile allowed us to use events that were of great benefit to the team. The Scrum events we chose to use ensured that we were continuously progressing, collaborating, communicating, and delivering a product that would be of high value to both SNHU Travel and their customers. The flexibility, adaptability, and user-centric focus of this approach were key to our successful implementation.