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CS 250 Final Project

Now that the development team has completed the deployment of the new SNHU travel application, I would like to reflect on how the agile development process helped the team build a comprehensive site and fulfill the customers goals. As the scrum master, I got to see how the different members of our team, the product owner, developers, and testers along with myself used different agile techniques throughout the build to transform our process from our old waterfall development method. The client brought us a problem of needing a new travel site to offer specialized travel packages to stay ahead of the competition, and after their presentation as scrum master, I formed the agile development team, and created the daily scrum meetings and met with the team members. Throughout the development process, I coordinated with the product owner to keep the product backlog in mind as we continued to check off development goals with the developers and testers. Midway through the build, the customer came to us and asked us to pivot the direction of the build to tailor the new site to be focused on health and wellness vacations instead of all types. I met again with the development team and emphasized to them that we could still meet our deadlines and make updated sprint goals. Our development team would take our sprint deadlines and create user stories to focus their coding efforts towards. Throughout the build they coordinated with the testers to confirm if the new features worked as intended while keeping account of how end users would use the travel app. When the customer asked us to change the end goal of the project, the developers and testers again adapted their approach to fit the new focus.

The updated user stories tailored the testing towards making sure that the travel site would successfully show results for vacations focused on wellness and detox. We initially had the users’ stories geared towards making sure the site would correctly take the filters put on the search including, desired price point, locations, themes, and if they had visited that area before. With an agile approach and staying adaptable in situations that require quick changes, the team was able to change the user stories to focus on making sure the filter would only show health and wellness vacations. The development team updated the database of potential vacations to only show these types of destinations and the user story was able to be completed within the timeline. Working in an agile approach helped the team avoid a slowdown when the customer changed the end goal of the project. If we were still using a waterfall development method, the team would have had to finish all the other sprint goals before refactoring the approach to account for the new goal. In a programming sense, the base architecture of the site did not need to change with these updated parameters, it instead needed a change of the search algorithm and database schemas. With our agile approach we could compartmentalize this change and keep development going on the other parts of the site at the same time so that progress could continue while other team members focused on the new issues.

As scrum master on this project, maintaining effective constant communication between team members was key to our success in meeting the client’s deadlines. I instituted a daily scrum meeting that was limited to 15 minutes so that everyone could give their status on their current issues, and I could then always relay that information back to the product owner and client so that the status of the build was always kept updated. I also created and maintained a information radiator in the form of a team kanban board in Jira where I worked with the product owner to catalog the product backlog to track all of the development goals in one place. Throughout this larger sprint we had a few different mini sprints where these user stories and development modules were contained. By keeping this board visible to the entire team, it encouraged transparency and cooperation between team members. Partnered with the daily meetings, I would make sure that if any issues were lagging behind or new demands were brought up by the customer, that the development team would communicate with each other on a constant basis and make sure these new roadblocks were handled in a timely manner.

There are many different Scrum-agile organizational tools I could have used to make this team be effective. To further encourage constant communication inside the team and to store daily scrum meeting notes, I started a Microsoft Teams channel that is connected to our Jira project board. This way our team members can always ask questions of each other and myself and be able to tag exact issues from our project board. This functionality allows for everyone to see new comments and notes and to alert everyone when a new module is ready for testing and deployment. Storing the codebase was another key area to set up as scrum master on this team and I successfully deployed a Github project to store the project. I set up managed deployment access and local branching for the developers and testers to maintain solid versioning and prevent any unwanted deployments to the main build of the website.

In conclusion, using the Scrum-agile approach to build the SNHU Travel project was the best decision over using a traditional waterfall development method. With the waterfall method the team would have had to wait for each module to be completed before moving on to the next step, and with the decision to pivot the build to focus on health and wellness vacations in the middle of development, this would have pushed our timeline out way longer. Agile methods helped the team stay in constant communication throughout the process and collaborate with relative ease. Tracking changes and pushing deployments was a smooth process as well and as scrum master, I was able to keep all team members engaged and respected during the sprint. There are not many cons for building the travel site this way, however we did have to push the team quite hard to make the desired deadline for the client. I could have done better as scrum master keeping the overall scope more focused and kept our resource and cost planning lower where these issues tend to come into longer projects using agile development. In the end, the team utilized a variety of agile practices to complete the travel project on time and in budget for the customer.