Jacquelin Kitcher

CS-250: Software Development Lifecycle

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**Sprint Review and Retrospective**

The roles on this Scrum-agile team all had a significant impact on the success of the project we were given for SNHU Travel. Starting with the product owner, who worked with the client and other stakeholders as well as the rest of the Scrum team to facilitate communication and understanding between SNHU Travel and the Scrum team. This was achieved by developing the product backlog, providing clarity and understanding of the user stories, and discussing the priorities of the user stories with the team. For example, when the client came back after development had already started development, the product owner was able to discuss those changes with the Scrum team and receive their feedback on what components were feasible to manage the changing priorities of the project. The product owner then updated the user stories for the rest of the team to begin working on during the next sprint. As the Scrum master, I played a role in working with the product owner to clarify and prioritize user stories, and to support the development team to create a working product. I ran Scrum events, which included the daily standup meeting, and sprint planning, review, and retrospective. The development team worked together to create the features specified in the user stories. They met during the daily standup to discuss progress and provide feedback to the product owner regarding changing priorities. They assisted with estimating the project, and the developers and testers worked in pairs to better understand each other’s roles to ensure a working product using an efficient process.

The use of user stories from the product backlog gave the team a clear direction for each sprint so focus was on one user story at a time, while allowing items listed lower in the product backlog evolve based on customer needs before we started work on them. The first few user stories lent clarity to the subsequent user stories as we were able to provide a better level of detail as we progressed through the product backlog. The order of the user stories allowed us to assume the mindset of the customer to develop a product that suited their needs. One of our higher priorities was to create a price limit filter, and the purpose of this feature was to help a customer to find a package that fits their budget. We developed this feature, and after the first test case, we were able to adjust it a bit to better fit the needs of the user. When we began, we created the filter as a text box where the user could enter their max price, but after testing, we changed the text box to a price range slider. This proved to be more efficient by removing the ability for incorrect formats returning an error, and not letting a user select a price range that was lower than the lowest priced package.

The Scrum-agile approach is designed to be able to change directions with ease. This helps because of short sprints focusing on one user story at a time. When SNHU Travel reached out explaining that they would like to focus on detox and wellness travel experiences, we were able to begin that during the next Sprint. The product owner took feedback from the rest of the team and clarified expectations with the client. Had we been using a waterfall method, we might have already been so far into the project that it would hold the team up for weeks re-doing the new plan to begin again.

During this project, I used several forms of communication with the rest of the team. The Scrum events helped everyone meet to discuss the project regularly, and we used email communication when needed to clarify details that needed more clarification. For example, the developer needed to discuss a few things with the tester and the product owner when the team switched gears based on SNHU Travel's request by asking the product owner about an updated timeline and estimation of services, and to check with the tester to make sure they were able to update their test cases with the new information from the user stories. The developers and testers worked closely together to test and develop simultaneously, and I made myself available to the whole team to offer support when needed, especially regarding the agile process.

Some of the tools we used that I feel were particularly helpful were the use of a project management tool. We selected Jira for our Scrum boards so the whole team could interact while the project is being developed. Since Jira works across an array of teams, it seems like a scalable option to utilize, as more of our teams transition from waterfall to agile. Another benefit of Jira is that if we choose another agile method outside of Scrum, Jira can handle it so it allows us flexibility if needed. Some of the agile principles that contributed to the success of this project were to work together daily (daily Standup), deliver working product frequently (using short sprints), and welcome change (re-prioritize user stories in product backlog), among others.

During the project we noted a few drawbacks of the Scrum-agile approach. Firstly, this methodology is new to our team, so it took a little longer for us to complete the project due to a learning curve. Secondly, as the Scrum Master I spent so much time training and communicating with the team that I couldn’t provide support in the ways I wished I could. For this reason, I think hiring a Scrum-agile trainer to support the transition to agile would be a great benefit for the entire company. With those drawbacks considered, the benefits far outweigh them. We had better team communication, we were able to handle unexpected changes with ease, and each member of the team felt valued. It improved staff morale to meet every day at the daily standup, and overall, we feel like the sprint process created a better working product for SNHU Travel.

For this specific project with SNHU Travel, I think the Scrum-agile approach was the best approach to take. It allowed us to continue communication with the customer, adapt to changes, and develop and test more quickly, so we were able to provide working product more quickly. This gained the confidence of the customer and improved team morale. With a couple of tweaks and extra support, I think this could be a great model for more of our teams to use in future products.