CS 250 Final Project – Scrum Retrospective

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The scrum team recently completed a project for SNHU Travel, setting up a new site, implementing new travel booking tools specified for detox/wellness, and allowing users to create accounts to assist with finding trips of their liking. There were some hiccups along the way, but we completed the project on time as promised. The following is a retrospective on the project so that we can learn from it moving forward.

# The Scrum-Agile Approach

Firstly, all the various team roles strongly contributed to the success of this project. The Product Owner was a real asset with communication. She had regular contact with the customer, as well as their end users, to make sure the rest of the team was kept up to date on any changes that came up. Designing, developing and testing can be taxing enough without having to worry about communication with the users so this helped everyone stay on task. The developer did a fantastic job writing all the code for the site and was also able to keep up when the customer made changes part way through. Everything runs beautifully, looks great and the customer is very happy with the outcome. The Tester got a great array of tests set up for all the user stories, ensuring the programs were running as intended. He also was able to tweak these tests as changes were made in record time, so the developer had time to make her own changes and ensure that they also worked as intended. I don’t like to “toot my own horn,” however I will also say that as the Scrum Master, I feel I did an adequate job in facilitating the project, by helping to mitigate impediments, coaching where needed and starting the daily Scrums.

Continuing with user stories, the Scrum-agile approach also helped each of the user stories be completed. Mainly, having the user stories in place and the flow of the Scrum-agile approach ensured nothing got lost in the shuffle. The Product Owner did a good job creating the user stories, though some turned out to be larger than they should have been. Having complete user stories also gave the Tester his goals for each of his tests and the reasons why those were the goals.

## Project Changes

As we all remember, there was a major change near the end of the project. Originally, we were creating a tool to find the best niche travel destinations and trips based on user input. In the final Sprint, our customer informed our Product Owner that they instead wanted the tool to find the best travel destinations for detox/wellness trips specifically. Luckily, the team managed to roll with the change well, from the Product Owner informing the team about the change as soon as possible, to the Tester adjusting his tests immediately, to the Developer making the necessary adjustments. Changes in scope, especially last-minute ones are always difficult, but the Scrum-agile method allowed us to quickly make the changes without overwhelming any one of us and still complete the project on time.

### **Communication.**

As we all know, when it comes to agile methods in general, communication is one of the largest key factors to success. Our daily Scrum meeting every morning is in place specifically to establish that communication. Throughout this project, communication played a pivotal role in successfully completing everything by the deadlines. As a specific example, at one point the Tester needed clarification on some functionality and design aspects and reached out through email to our Product Owner. The email in question was clear and concise, requesting clarification with enough detail to get the point across. The Product Owner, in turn, responded quickly and gave the detailed answers the Tester needed to complete his work in a timely manner, which in turn allowed the Developer to continue her own work quickly as well. While this is good, there is the question of how to be more precise with details earlier, which would remove the necessity of these emails in the future.

#### Tool and Event effectiveness***.***

A last point to be made before the full evaluation on our Scrum-agile approach to this project is the effectiveness of the tools and Scrum events. Jira was an effective tool in this process, especially working in tandem with our Scrum events. Jira is a very flexible tool and with the customization options available we were able to use it very effectively with our Sprint planning, Sprints and daily Scrums. It helped during the Sprint planning process by acting as a job board, and during the Sprints themselves, it allowed for real-time updates so we could react more quickly to changes.

##### **Effectiveness Assessment***.*

During this project, our Scrum-agile approach had many benefits but there were also some drawbacks. Mainly, the agile method and specifically Scrum allowed for smoother workflow, aiding in completing aspects of the overall project more quickly. The constant communication between team members meant everyone was on the same page and ensured that no one was unaware of something going on. A downside to the agile method, however, is that last minute changes are a factor that can lead to wasted time and effort and causing a lot of rework. Also, the “just enough” mentality of agile also means we could not spare time to improve on the features we created once they were done. On the one hand, it provided a clear “done” point for each function, but on the other hand it is possible we could have provided a more polished product. Overall, I would say the Scrum-agile approach was the best choice for the SNHU Travel project. The pluses outweigh the minuses here, and while there were some changes that could be made to the process, the overall method was sound. Great work everyone.