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Final Project

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The success of the SNHU Travel project was the culmination of a team effort. The Scrum Master was integral in organizing Scrum events and removing impediments from the development process. The Scrum Master also worked with the Product Owner to ensure efficient Backlog maintenance (Cobb, 2015). The product owner communicated with the customer to get a broad understanding of the project requirements. The Product Owner then turned these broad, along with the development team, into user stories that the Product Owner maintains and organizes (Schweber & Sutherland, 2020). The development team oversaw planning sprints and completing user stories. Testers defined the Team’s definition of “done” or the goal for the user story (Cobb, 2015). Developers may spend too much time “gold-plating” features without this definition.

The Scrum-agile approach to the software development lifecycle was vital in completing the user stories. Scrum-agile completes development in iterations known as sprints. These iterations allow the Product Owner to prioritize the work to be completed, ensuring the development team delivers valuable features and products. The user stories are kept vague to create a conversation about the consumer’s needs and the intention of the feature. The short sprints allow the team to monitor progress and make necessary adjustments. These also enable changes to the product backlog due to the consumers’ changing needs. The experience with SNHU travel supports this as the team created and added user stories based on the results gathered by the product owner from a focus group. Planning and adding new features to ongoing projects could be disastrous without the short iterations (Barnes, 2023).

The Scrum-agile approach supports interruptions or changes to the project’s direction. The SNHU Travel project experienced a few of these interruptions. One example is that the website had a top vacation package feature that was initially an embedded hyperlink to the homepage. The interruption occurred when the product owner suggested that the consumer preferred a slideshow of the top vacations instead of the list. With Scrum techniques, the team could plan, prioritize, and deliver the slide show without interrupting ongoing development. Another example is when the consumer wanted the top vacation packages to focus on detox/wellness packages. The team again was able to fit these new requirements into a sprint and deliver an acceptable version of “done” by upholding Scum principles such as constant communication and adaptability.

These interruptions allowed me to practice productive communication techniques between team members. The slide show interruption was an opportunity to practice communicating with the Product Owner to clarify the specifications of the test cases. This communication was in the form of an email. Scrum-agile stresses the importance of face-to-face communication (Cobb, 2015). This is only sometimes possible with tight schedules and dispersed teams. Therefore, the email format allows the team to be in constant communication. The email also required a fair amount of elaboration from the Product Owner. This format would allow them the opportunity to answer questions thoroughly and accurately. As a tester, I also had to communicate the standard of “done” user stories for the upcoming sprint. This required attention to detail and to effectively communicate the functionality of features. As a product owner, I had to effectively listen to and speak to the consumers' desires through user stories. The stories must be vague enough that the developers can implement how they feel fit but must convey the desired results of the feature. Communication is made more effective by Scrum-agile organizational tools.

Scrum-agile organizational tools and principles must be utilized for a successful software development lifecycle. The most vital of these tools is the Product Backlog. The Product Backlog holds all the user stories required to complete a project (Schweber & Sutherland, 2020). The Backlog’s maintenance is the responsibility of the Product Owner, who is to refine and prioritize the user stories contained within continuously. This tool is often enhanced by digital tools such as Microsoft’s Azure. These tools increase the transparency of a project by making status and workflow available to all in real time. Taking opportunities to uphold Scrum-agile principles such as transparency increases the team's effectiveness (Cobb, 2015). For example, one week, we had a group assignment to adopt a Scrum practice to a team transitioning from a waterfall methodology. This was in the form of a discussion board. The assignment went well. However, we would have been more effective using other Scrum organizational tools, such as a Kanban board. This visualizes the work that needs to be done, allowing others to see more effectively where they could assist.

The Scrum-agile approach has several pros and cons. Scrum-agile supports team collaboration by encouraging developers to take ownership of the project and delegate duties as they see fit. Scrum events and organizational teams increase the transparency of the work to all facets of the team (Schweber & Sutherland, 2020). The short iterations and adaptable nature of Scrum ensure customer satisfaction and collaboration. The Scrum framework introduces many tools and values that lead to a successful SDLS. However, Scrum is not perfect and does have drawbacks.

Scrum-agile is just a framework and is not a cookie-cutter fit for businesses. Thus, an adaptable mindset is necessary to tackle the steep learning curve. Some projects are not a good fit for Scrum. A more plan-driven approach is essential for a project with clearly defined requirements, a fixed-price budget, and a strict timeline (Barnes, 2023). Scrum also takes a great deal of commitment. Teams will likely take time to adopt Scrum’s values and principles fully. So, companies searching for a “quick hit” or to quickly slash budgets will probably not succeed in an agile transition. Businesses often must restructure other departments to fit the new Agile development (Cobb, 2015).

Considering all the pros and cons, Scrum-agile was the best approach for the SNHU Travel project. The project was initially loosely defined with vague requirements and was given a relatively short development time of only seven weeks. Taking a more plan-driven approach at this time would have wasted valuable time when the requirements and expectations of the project were likely to change. The project also faced several interruptions, which may have resulted in delays. For example, when the Project Owner included the slide-show requirement, this may have caused a bottleneck with a waterfall approach. Thanks to the Scrum-agile approach, the team could adapt to the change and fit the current work into a sprint without any delays to other project stories.

**References**:

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