SNHU Travel Sprint Review & Retrospective

Jonathan Warner

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Southern New Hampshire University

Professor Arthur McWain

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Throughout this course, I took on the various roles within my Scrum team with the goal of developing an application for SNHU Travel, a travel agency with aspirations of expanding their client base with new tools. During development, I assumed the roles of Product Owner, Scrum Master, Developer, and Tester. The first part of this review and retrospective has the goal of analyzing how each role contributed to the project’s success. Following that, this review and retrospective will focus on how a Scrum-agile approach addressed the completion of user stories, supported the project through an interruption and change of direction, and overall helped my team be successful.  
  
  
**The Scrum Team**

**Product Owner**

Prior to any development taking place, I assumed the role of the Product Owner in Module Three. To start, I met with a user focus group and recorded what they wanted to see in the project’s final application. From there, I broke down the feedback from the focus group into different user stories. Each story accounted for a different functionality that the users wanted to see in SNHU Travel’s app. The stories also had their priorities and sizes listed within them. After development took place, I also assumed the role of a Product Owner to write an email asking for clarification on different user stories. The development that was previously mentioned was handled by my next role, the developer.

**Developer**

Once the user stories were created, I assumed the role of a developer and modified the pre-existing application to add a "Top Five Destinations" list. This implementation was in response to one of the requests made during the focus group: a list of the most popular vacation destinations. My work as a developer did not stop in this module, however. In order to address a change in direction that occurred in Module Five, which will be discussed later, I had to modify the pre-existing SNHU Travel application and adjust its focus from general popularity to a specific niche of travel destinations. The rest of the hands-on work with the application fell to my next assumed role, the tester.

**Tester**

Following the modifications and additions made in Module Three, I assumed the role of tester. As such, my job was to create test cases that tested and verified the functionality of newly added features. These test cases focused on the user stories I created as Product Owner earlier in the project and include a Price- and Popularity-based Sorting Filter, a Vacation Type Search Filter, and a Preference-based Destination Top Five List. Once these initial test cases were created, they were revised in response to some clarifications asked for by a fellow tester. The majority of the other contributions made during this project fall under the last role I have yet to discuss, that of the Scrum Master.

**Scrum Master**

Scrum Master was the first role I assumed in Module Two, and the first contribution made in this role was handling and recording a Scrum event. My starting task was to view a different team’s Daily Scrum meeting and learn what key questions could be asked to frame a meeting. This is where I learned about three essential questions to frame any Daily Scrum meeting: What did I do yesterday? What will I do today? What impedes me? I then analyzed and discussed where their Scrum master could improve. Finally, I made sure that I properly learned the different aspects and practices of Scrum so that I could be an effective Scrum Master and help to clear up any uncertainty about the processes a team member may have. Each of the various roles I assumed during the course of this development cycle had significant contributions to the final product, but now let’s broaden this analysis to look at how the Scrum-agile approach aided in the completion of our user stories.

**The Scrum-Agile Approach to User Stories**

After meeting with the user focus group and recording their feedback, I was able to utilize a Scrum-agile approach to break down their requests for functionality into compartmentalized user stories. The three main stories that were created include a preference-based destination tier list, a search filter for selecting specific vacation types, and a feature that allows for filtering and sorting based on price and popularity. Each story provided an estimated size of the feature, a priority level, and a basic description of its functionality. From these stories, we were then able to create test cases, during which the user story focusing on a price- and popularity-based filter was simplified to a sorting function that allows users to sort search results by popularity or price. By needing to keep user stories at a reasonable size for Sprints, the team was able to recognize that the original story was outside of the current project’s scope. This is where another positive aspect of the agile methodology appeared, as the team was able to adapt the story so that it could be completed within the Sprint. Taking a Scrum-agile approach can effectively address what a user wants, but how can this approach handle an interruption and change in direction?   
  
  
**The Scrum-Agile Approach to Interruptions and Changes in Direction**

In the middle of development, SNHU Travel met with the team’s Product Owner and requested an adjustment to the project’s requirements based on a new industry report. It suggested the next big travel sector is going to be detox or wellness vacations, and SNHU Travel management wanted to capitalize on shifting industry trends. The request was to change the "Top Five Destinations" list into a "Top Five Detox and Wellness Destinations" list. Thanks to the iterative nature of the Scrum-agile approach, we were able to quickly make changes to the functionality of the original user story without needing to worry about breaking pieces of code elsewhere. This change in direction resulted in no noticeable impact on our development time and really highlighted the communication a Scrum-agile approach allows for.

**The Scrum-Agile Approach to Communication**

The request for a change in direction was easily addressed thanks to the open communication between the team, the Product Owner, and SNHU Travel’s management that the Scrum-agile approach emphasizes. When SNHU Travel management received the industry report, they were able to rapidly meet with the team’s Product Owner and share their newly desired change in requirements. The Scrum-agile process then facilitated the Product Owner meeting with the team and sharing this information so that a discussion about how to address the new requirements could be held. Another example of good communication within the team was when the Product Owner and Tester were clearing up uncertainties about some user stories in order to create better test cases. The open and transparent atmosphere the process promotes is highlighted here, as the clarifications needed were clearly specified and no important concerns were withheld. An emphasis on communication is one of the many Scrum-agile principles that helped my team be successful throughout this project.

**Organizational Tools and Scrum-Agile Principles**

Organizational tools and Scrum-agile principles were major contributors to the success of my team. Starting in Module Two, the Product Owner and Scrum Master had their initial meeting with SNHU Travel management, where the initial project requirements were presented. Following the meeting, the team created and utilized an Agile Team Charter to set guidelines and provide a general direction for development. This charter also laid out the team’s roles and starting responsibilities to reinforce the agile principle of self-organization. The team was able to conduct multiple guiding Scrum meetings throughout development as well, which included a meeting with a user focus group for user stories and a team meeting to discuss SNHU Travel management’s changed requirements and a discussion on how we were going to address them. The utilization of an organizational tool, such as the charter, or the implementation of Scrum events and meetings helped the team be successful, but how helpful was the Scrum-agile approach as a whole?

**The Scrum-Agile Approach to Development**

During the course of the SNHU Travel application’s development, the adoption of a Scrum-agile approach proved beneficial to the success of the project. Some of the common disadvantages of the Scrum-agile approach, such as its difficulty scaling with larger teams, were mitigated by the fact that my team consisted of only me. Disagreements or misunderstandings of the Scrum processes between two team members, which is another common problem, were also completely erased thanks to the team’s composition. On the other hand, the Scrum-agile approach allowed me to easily break down the requests of users into user stories and develop exactly what was asked for. While breaking down a project into user stories could prove more difficult in a large project, it was just another pure positive for this one. Finally, the Scrum-agile approach allowed the team to easily adapt when SNHU Travel management changed its stated requirements. A typical waterfall model wouldn’t have been able to easily accommodate the newly introduced requirements as easily as the agile model did. Overall, the Scrum-agile approach was an effective choice and, in my opinion, was the best approach for the SNHU Travel development project.