Sprint Review and Retrospective

A Scrum-agile team has different roles that all contribute to the overall efficiency and success of the team, and by extension the product that is created. The effectiveness of a Scrum-agile team is evident when looking at our work on the SNHU Travel Project where each role was an equally important component, several parts to a whole.

The Scrum Master had the responsibility of first meeting with the client, SNHU Travel, with the Product Owner to talk about what they hope to accomplish. Once he had a good idea of what needed to be done, he was responsible for assembling the rest of the team and putting together the agile team charter which consisted of the business case, mission statement, team roles, success criteria, key project risks, rules of behavior, and communication guidelines. This all gives guidelines to the team, helped set a plan, and kept things organized. Throughout the sprint, the Scrum Master was responsible for facilitating all Scrum meetings, backlog refinement, and making sure Scrum was understood by the team and correctly followed. The Product Owner also met with the client at the beginning along with the Scrum Master, but before she called the Scrum Master in she went over with the client exactly what they wanted to achieve and set a deadline of five weeks. After this, she then led a focus group of SNHU Travel customers to get an idea of the features that they wanted. With all of this information from the client and focus group, she was able to put together and prioritize the product backlog, and also put together user story details which laid out the value statement and acceptance criteria. Throughout the sprint, the Product Owner was responsible for keeping in touch with the client and relaying any changes from them to the rest of the team.

For the SNHU Travel Project, the tester took the user stories and provided test cases. These test cases specified pre-conditions, inputs, and pass/fail measures. When new information was given that the Product Owner had received from the client, the tester needed to revise the test cases to meet these changes. The developer role used Java and created the slideshow for this project. At first, the developer needed to add photos, destinations, and descriptions to the slideshow for the top 5 destinations, but after receiving information from the Product Owner that the client wants to focus on detox/wellness, the team needed to revise the slideshow to meet these requirements. The developer was responsible for creating clear, functional, and well-documented code.

When it came to helping the user stories come to completion, a Scrum-agile approach was very beneficial. Organizing them into a product backlog allowed the stories to be prioritized, sized, and also allowed them to be easily reordered if need be. This prioritization showed the order in which the stories should be completed. User stories details gave a closer look at the user story and laid out the acceptance criteria that they needed to meet for them to be completed. From there, the tester was able to create test cases out of the stories and lay out the pass/fail measures. The Scrum-agile approach allowed for the stories to be created and made sure that they had clear criteria for completion that just met the requirements, preventing unnecessary additions. The benefits of this approach were even more clear when there was a request by the client to make a change to focus on detox and wellness vacations. When the change came, the Product Owner was able to reprioritize the backlog to make sure that the same deadlines were kept. That way, previous work was not wasted. Besides updating the backlog, the test cases were also able to be easily updated by the tester to reflect the changes. Using the Scrum-agile approach meant that reprioritization was not difficult and that carefully laid plans didn’t need to be completely redone.

Good communication is valuable on a Scrum team and I was able to demonstrate my ability to communicate effectively in various ways. One example was the email that I sent to the Product Owner as the role of a tester. The email was simple and to the point, and it covered each question for each story that I was hoping to get an answer for, thus creating space for straightforward communication. Asking questions would allow me to have a better understanding of the requirements and features of a user story that may not have been covered in the value statement. This encourages collaboration among the team because it is a way for the tester to work closely with the Product Owner to find more information which could then be relayed to other parts of the team. Another example of good communication was creating clear acceptance criteria for user stories and pass/fail measures for test cases. These are examples of good communication because these criteria are what tells the team if a story has been successfully completed or not. This also encouraged collaboration because there were different roles working with the same user stories, so communication needed to be effective across the team.

Tools for organization and Scrum-agile principles were both beneficial to the team’s success. Sprint planning was done in the beginning to define the work and set the sprint goal, and daily Scrum helped the team collaborate with each other and discover any issues. The backlog organized the stories and the development team exhibited cross-functional skills, which is important in Scrum, when testing and creating the slideshow. Openness, respect, and communication were always present especially when the project changed direction. These Scrum practices and values all contributed to the overall success of the team.

The Scrum-agile approach was ultimately effective for the SNHU Travel project. One of the cons is that the Scrum team is new and this approach is most effective with experienced team members. The Scrum approach can also lead to unclear deadlines, though this was not an issue for this specific project as the deadline was kept, even when plans were interrupted. However, this can also be seen as a pro since it leaves room for changes to be made without derailing the entire project, as seen by the detox and wellness change. Another pro is that while everything leans towards being more dynamic, it is all still well-organized so that priorities, expectations, pass/fail measures, and criteria for acceptance are all very clear. Overall, the benefits largely outweigh the disadvantages and this was the best approach to handling the SNHU Travel project.