Final Project

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Each role in the Scrum-Agile team contributed a vital part of the group work that made up the project we worked on for SNHU Travel. I will start with the Scrum Master. The Scrum Master for our team was a direct line to the Product Owner and translated all of the user stories into workable tasks for the development team to take on, as well as for the tester to make detailed criteria for their pass and fail criteria. The Scrum Master facilitated communication as well as helped remove obstacles by participating in the daily scrum to aid the other team members. Though in the example provided by the coursework showed the Product Owner relaying the change in plans to the developer and tester, in a real scenario here the Scrum Master would have relayd this message along with the new organized backlog from the Product Owner to the team, as well as aided in the project’s transition from being a travel package program to one tailored to health and well-being packages.

The Product Owner met frequently with the stakeholders from SNHU Travel, as well as with potential users who relayed their desires to the Product Owner. An example would be from the feature that allowed users to filter travel packages by price, which the Product Owner deemed a high priority due to its likelihood of being a much requested feature, and placed it at the top of the backlog. From my experience with the work done for SNHU Travel, the Product Owner is key to the success of the entire scrum team, they are the direct representative of the client and the consumers, and they decide which features to prioritize when it comes to delivering the final product in a timely manner.

The testers developed specific pass and fail criteria for each of the user stories relayed to the team from the Product Owner. They looked into a feature, such as the price tool, and came up with criteria to use against working portions that the development team delivered to them. For a specific example, one test case was that all of the links in the program would correctly relay the user to the proper travel package. Once the change in plans occurred, the tester set about changing their tests to meet the new specifications given to them through the Product Owner. By having a detailed spreadsheet of previous tests, the swap from basic travel packages to specific “health” packages would have been all the easier due to their prior work.

The development team attended daily scrum, where they discussed where they were at, what was done, and what they planned on doing next as well as any issues they may run into. By maintaining open communication, the team was able to stay on the same page and make the transition to the client’s requests easy. Once the Product Owner delivered the new requests, the developer took what they had already done, which was a listview of vacation packages, and changed them to meet the new requirements. It was not shown in the example, but the tester requested these new additions to the code base for testing, and I assume that the development team gave them their new work to be tested for their usability and functionality.

From the work done for SNHU Travel, user stories were central to the scrum framework. Each story represented the functionality of the overall project from an end-user’s perspective. The Scrum-Agile approach aided in completing these user stories by continuous participation in daily scrum, which gives constant feedback and promotes iterative development. For an example I will use the search function from the examples in SNHU Travel. The origional request for search filters was broad, but through an agile approach each team member shaped it into a workable task with specific criteria for its success in the overall project. By using a Scrum-Agile approach to development, persistent iterative refinement was easily possible and this ensured that the final product met the users’ and SNHU Travel’s expectations in a seemless working environment.

The one interruption that required the team to adapt was when a stakeholder requested in a change in design midway through a sprint. The team was almost ready to deliver a working portion of the product, but it was requested that all travel packages be included based on their health and well-being benefits opposed to the original idea of “hot deals.” Thankfully we were working in an agile framework which allowed us to adapt to this change quickly and efficiently. During that daily scrum we revisited our sprint goals and adjusted the backlog to include the client’s new requests. Due to our constant testing and sharing of our working code, we were able to incorporate the new design without having to completely start anew or in any way compromise critical functionalities of the final working product. Flexibility like this is only found in a team that follows agile principles, and therefore allowed us to make sure the product remained in line with stakeholder needs and requests.

Effective communication was the backbone of our work for SNHU Travel, each day the team participated in daily scrum and stayed informed on what we needed to be working on or improving, or, in the end, changing. For an example, during meetings the team provided updates on their progress as well as any changes made to the product backlog. Due to this we were able to work quickly and efficiently, as well as adapt to new requests without losing too much “velocity.” Maintaining an environment with open communicaiton encourages a transparent environment where collaboration was easier to maintain and issues could be found quickly and addressed.

During our sprint we used methods such as a Kanban board to visualize workflow and manage tasks. We divided the board into different stages of the development process by having columns such as “To Do,” “In Progress,” “Review,” and “Done.” This visualization allowed the team to quickly identify what needs to be started, what needs to be tested, and which portions are done and should be added to the codebase to await final review and testing. During sprint planning meetings, tasks were added to the “To Do” column where team members chose tasks based on priority and placed them into the “In Progress” column, and discussed potential setbacks they may encounter while working on that task. The Kanban board helped the team maintain a good workflow, as well as maintain flexibility and respond to the change in priorities without needing a lot of time for replanning.

The Scrum-Agile approach had several advantages, as well as some challenges, during the work for the SNHU Travel project.

**Pros:** The Scrum-Agile approach allowed for continous improvement and adaptability. Feedback loops existed and ensured that the final product will be in line with user needs and client expectations. The team’s ability to adapt demonstrated the clear advantages of working with this mindset.

**Cons:** One challenge comes from “feature creep” associated with the flexibility of scrum, such as being welcome to change can change things at the last moment and potentially cause problems. This challenge requires very careful management of the product backlog to avoid overcommiting or taking on too many requests from users or the client.

**Conclusion.**

The Scrum-Agile approach was the best approach for SNHU Travel. The client wanted this project to be completed in a short window, and many requests for functionality were made by end-users. In a waterfall environment, maintaining cohesion between team members would not have been as easy, and start-up of the project would have required a lot of time without the Scrum-Agile framework that allows for more effective communication. Also, the change in plans would have made the team in a waterfall environment significantly lose momentum, as they would have to find areas necessary to be reviewed and changed instead of having prior knowledge of each story point and where it is in a maintained codebase. Without the Scrum-Agile approach, I do not believe we would have been able to deliver a working product in the timeline given by SNHU Travel, but instead with the tools afforded by scrum methodology we were more than capable of delivering.