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CS-250: Journal - Product Owner



Preface

Today marks the beginning of a new project. I've met with the client, Amanda, and our Scrum Master, Ron, to learn more about SNHU Travel's business problems that our team is being asked to solve. We had a great meeting and learned that Amanda is interested in expanding the SNHU Travel customer base by offering trendy, niche, vacation packages online. SNHU Travel has been one of the top travel agencies in New Hampshire. I have begun document creation, and project setup to manage the Product Backlog and have set up a couple of focus groups to begin fleshing out the User Stories. I've started off the Product Backlog with its first User Story which will need to be refined with the aid of the team: Setup Development Environment & Infrastructure Pre-Requisites to begin development of Client-facing components that can be delivered.

Day One

Met with the development team to discuss the scope of the project and assist them with the development of the team charter. I stressed the importance of adhering to the five-week timeframe. I answered some overall questions regarding the objectives and overall vision for the project.

Day Two

Met with a focus group of current SNHU Travel customers that use other providers for their niche travel package needs. I led them through a discussion to find out what features were important to them. They provided invaluable insight into what users will desire most in the final version of the applications. We identified five requirements/User Stories:



1. As an end user, I want to click a link to view the top five destinations list, so that I can see the most popular locations for travel to educate myself on the best places to go.
2. As an end user, I want to click on a link to view the top five destinations list within my budget so that I can see the popular locations for travel within my budget to educate myself on the best places to go
3. As an end user, I want to click on a link to view the top five destinations list based on package type so that I can see the popular locations for travel based on my preferred type (i.e. Cruise, Tour, Eco-friendly) to educate myself on the best places to go
4. As an end user, I want to click on a link to view the top five destinations list based on my preferred packages based on profile preferences so that I can see the popular locations for travel based on my preferences to educate myself on the best places to go
5. As an end user, I want to click on a link to view the top five destinations list based on packages I've previously purchased so that I can see the popular locations for travel based on my previous purchases to educate myself on the best places to go

I've added these to the Product Backlog after the initial infrastructure setup tasks, in the order presented above. I will revisit the ordering as the backlog is refined.

Day Three

I met again with the development team to begin the refinement process. Both Brian and Nicky offered great suggestions on the most efficient development frameworks and application and server infrastructure that will be needed to support the development process, and to best deploy the requirements of the system. With their assistance and Ron's guiding hand, we managed to refine and order all of the current Product Backlog items to a granularity sufficient for inclusion



in a sprint. By Monday, I should have a well-developed Product Backlog with enough sprint-ready User Stories for at least the next two sprints.

Day Three

Today I met with Amanda's team to discuss their expectations and how they might want to integrate the new system with their current processes. I used the Joint Application Design principles to brainstorm ideas for the system. Amanda has a wonderful team with creative ideas of how the system should look and feel, as well as how the system should interact with their current systems and staff. I've made some notes and some general, high-level user stories based on the session and will begin refining the stories and integrating them into the Product Backlog over the next few days.

Day Four - Five

I worked on refining user stories today. I had to request some help from Ron, who was more than happy to help. He helped me make some prioritization decisions by reminding me that the highest priority should be given to those backlog items that will produce the most business value - along with any prerequisite infrastructure or features. Just having me talk him through my thought process for an hour helped me keep on track.

Monday

We've completed our first Sprint Planning ceremony. Ron did a great job facilitating, and I presented the Product Backlog to the team and reviewed why each item was given priority. I then reviewed each item, starting with the first, for the team to consider for inclusion in the Sprint



Backlog. Brian and Nick did a great job discussing the time needed to finish each user story and made good decisions about the Sprint Backlog. The Development Team is confident in their abilities to stay on schedule.

Tuesday

Ron, the Scrum Master, brought a relatively small issue to my attention that has caused some disruption - Chrissy has been communicating directly with the team and has become a distraction. Ron and I met with Chrissy to give her a brief update and to explain the scrum process, and that it was important that the team remain focused during the sprint. She was apologetic and assured us that she only wanted to help, and that going forward she would limit her Development Team contact to answering their questions, otherwise, she would reach out to Ron or me.

Wednesday-Friday

I have had several follow-up conversations with Chrissy and her team, as well as another with the focus group, to discuss additional features they are looking for - and to answer some questions I had before I could proceed further with refining several user stories

In addition I have started to review user stories for acceptance that the team has designated, “Done”. It’s exciting to see user stories move from the Sprint Backlog to “In-Progress” to “Done”! We did hit a problem, though. One of the items that had been designated “Done” did not, in my judgment, pass the acceptance criteria. However, it was not a dependency for any of



the remaining user stories, so I made the decision to return it to the Product Backlog for a future sprint.

Friday

We had a successful first Sprint Review, today. I was able to review all the remaining completed Sprint Backlog items for acceptance and determined that they all passed their respective acceptance criteria. The meeting with the project stakeholders also went well. They were pleased with the progress that was made, and are excited to see what will be accomplished this week. The Development Team was able to answer their questions and respond to suggestions made by the stakeholders, with Ron and me stepping in where appropriate when specific product feature requests were being discussed to keep the meeting focused.

Afterward, the team met for the Sprint Retrospective and discussed what happened with the failed feature and what could be done to mitigate the risk of something similar occurring again. I was pleased to hear that Brian and Nicky had a clear understanding of the root cause of the problem, and a thoughtful plan moving forward.

I look forward to the remaining weeks on this project, and expect to continue refining user stories, and updating the goal with the SNHU Travel team until we deliver a deliverable that meets their need and delights them.