Module 3 Journal

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Engaging with users and stakeholders is a game-changer for a Product Owner because it helps make sure the travel booking software actually solves real problems instead of just guessing what users might want. When users are involved in the process, they feel heard, and their feedback directly influences the product, leading to better adoption and satisfaction. This approach also allows the development team to focus on high priority features that provide real value instead of investing time in unnecessary features. Stakeholder engagement builds trust and creates a collaborative environment where users feel heard. Agile development relies on user feedback to ensure continuous improvement, making stakeholder involvement a core principle (Launchnotes, 2024).

User stories are a key tool in Agile development, translating user needs into actionable development tasks. Unlike traditional requirements that focus on technical specification, user stories describe features from the user’s perspective. This helps facilitate the Scrum Team’s ability to prioritize and build functionality that adds genuine value. Well-crafted user stories enhance communication by providing clarity to both the development team and stakeholders. Effective user stories should be concise, user-focused and iterative, allowing the team to refine them based on feedback and evolving requirements (Cohn, 2010).

The user interviews conducted in this module highlighted the importance of direct feedback in shaping user stories. In the CS 250 Product Owner and User Focus Group Animation, customers emphasized the need for personalized destination recommendations, price-based filtering, and vacation type preferences. Without these discussions, the Scrum team might have made incorrect assumptions about user needs which could lead to a product lacking essential functionality. This feedback-driven approach ensures that development efforts remain user-centered and will directly contribute to an improved experience.

While user interviews provide valuable insights, they are not the sole method for collecting feedback. Surveys can capture broader input from a larger user base, usability testing can reveal real-world interaction issues and behavior tracking analytics can show how users navigate the system. By reviewing customer support data, we can highlight common user frustrations and areas needing improvement. Combining multiple data sources leads to more refined user stories which helps Agile teams make informed decisions that drive feature enhancements (Cohn, 2010).

Ultimately, Agile development revolves around keeping the user at the center of the process. Engaging with users, crafting meaningful user stories, and continuously gathering feedback ensure that the product remains relevant and valuable. Instead of relying on assumptions, Agile teams can leverage real user data to make informed decisions, leading to a stronger final product. A travel booking platform developed through this approach is more likely to succeed because it directly reflects what users need, rather than what the development teams think they need.

**References**

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