Sprint Review

Justin S Bennett

SNHU

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Kagan Ulucay

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In the Agile methodology the role of Scrum Master extends beyond the management of meetings and tasks; their primary purpose is to guide the team through the iterative process and help push for continuous improvement. This paper provides a detailed Sprint Review and retrospective on my experience with the SNHU Travel Project. Throughout my term, I’ve taken on several roles including: Product Owner, Developer, Tester, and now Scrum Master. With each role I’ve gained unique insights into the challenges Agile projects face, along with the tools used to overcome them. As a Product Owner, I focused on the creation of user stories to establish clear requirements for my team. As a Developer and Tester, I managed project interruptions by quickly adapting to shifts in requirements, rewriting code and test cases. Then finally, as a Scrum Master, I established and introduced lines of communication with my team and currently plan a sprint review. With this final retrospective, I analyze these experiences, the tools available to an Agile team, the effectiveness of the Agile process, and the suitability of Agile for our project with SNHU Travel.

In my first role as the Product Owner, my main job was to compile customer feedback from SNHU Travels website and transform it into useful user stories, prioritizing them by most important or foundational along the way. This method of compiling and prioritizing user stories helped convey the value of each task to my team and gave overall direction to the project. I also helped clarify what completion looked like by writing detailed acceptance criteria for each user story. For example, when writing one story, I outlined the behavior of a price range slider. As a Developer, this later provided me with a clear understanding of what needed to be implemented. These details along with backlog prioritization helped create a clear understanding of each task and streamlined the development process down the road.

After that, I took on the roles of Developer and Tester. Although these two roles are distinct, I like to group them because of their cyclical nature. Each implementation requires testing, and every test leads to improved implementation. During my time in these two roles, we experienced several shifts in development. First, SNHU Travel asked that we replace the initial list view of destinations with a slideshow style display. This required me as a tester, to rewrite test cases, and developers to change their implementation. Next, we were asked to narrow the available destinations to only a specific type, requiring me, as a developer, to rewrite portions of code. Because of Agile’s flexible and iterative design, we were able to easily reprioritize the backlog focusing on tasks that required updates to meet those new requirements. At one point, I even wrote an email asking for the removal of several tasks from the backlog that were no longer necessary due to the format changes. For example, the “Destination Type” filter was made redundant when all destinations were narrowed to a single category. By communicating this effectively using language that explains the issue we had the backlog reprioritized. This flexibility is key to how a Scrum-Agile team handles interruptions or changes like these.

The third role I’ll discuss is the Scrum Master. While I didn’t play the part of this role until now, I still actively learned about their place on the Scrum Team. The Scrum Master’s primary responsibilities include facilitating daily stand-ups, removing blockers, and managing other key Scrum Events. During daily stand-ups, which are short 15-minute meetings, Scrum Masters guide the discussion focusing on completed and pending tasks. They also ensure that team members raise any issues or obstacles that impede their progress; sometimes referred to as blockers. While some of these blockers are internal and quickly fixed, many are caused by external forces outside of the team’s control. For example, a system outage or missing external dependencies. These issues highlight another key responsibility of the Scrum Master. They don’t just facilitate communication between team members but also act as a relay between the team and external forces. Finally, the last responsibility they take on is the management of other Scrum Events. Things such as the Sprint Review, Sprint Retrospective, or Sprint Planning events. The Scrum Master has a hand in all these things. A Sprint Review, for example, is kind of like this paper in that it reflects on past work identifying what worked well and what didn’t. Ultimately, the Scrum Master role in Agile development is foster a sense of transparency and accountability within a project.

Finally, I want to discuss some tools we use as an Agile team for organization and communication. The first type of tool we commonly use in Agile development is the information radiator, which displays key details about individual tasks or information on the overall project. They provide a visual representation of the project’s progress while also giving insights into individual tasks. For example, the burn down chart, where tasks are listed and removed upon completion, is a great visual for the progress you’re making on a project. However, we often assign each task with a priority or points, which helps us look at the project through a more myopic lens. The second type of tool that we commonly see are digital platforms such as Jira or Azure. These tools streamline the Agile process by automating key elements and centralizing task management at a single point. They help automate things such as story tracking, backlog prioritization, and often even have their own information radiators.

So, to close this retrospective out and to evaluate the Scrum-Agile process for the purpose of software development I’d like to consider this question. What is the Scrum-Agile Method and how effective was the approach in tackling the SNHU Travel Project? Agile is an iterative method with an emphasis on flexibility, communication and collaboration, which all coalesce to create a project environment that adapts well to large and sudden changes in requirements. During my time as a Product Owner, I was able to easily communicate task value to my team through user stories, streamlining development. As a Developer and Tester, I felt the flexibility in our process when sudden changes came our way. Now, as a Scrum Master writing this retrospective, and as one who has played all these roles, I see the benefit that collaboration brings to this and every project. Given all of this, the shifting requirements and the need for constant adaptation, I believe the Scrum-Agile method was an ideal and necessary approach to deliver the best possible service in the SNHU Travel project.