CS250 FINAL PROJECT: SPRINT REVIEW AND RETROSPECTIVE

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Throughout the SNHU Travel project there were many different roles that contributed to the its success. The Scrum Master helped by making sure everyone on the team communicated. This was done in the form of hosting sprint planning, daily scrums, backlog refinement, and training team members on the Agile Scrum method.

The Product Owner played an important role in ensuring the clients needs were recognized and implemented into the project. This was accomplished by communicating with each team member and making them feel like their input is valued, this was done in the form of user stories. By documenting stakeholders’ preferences, observations and presenting to the development team in an organized manner, the Product Owner contributed greatly to the success of the SNHU Travel project.

The Tester also played a critical role to the success of the SNHU Travel project. The Tester did this by thoroughly reading the user stories and providing detailed feedback to the Product Owner on any items they needed clarification on. By being as thorough as possible the Tester was able to make descriptive test cases for the project and ensure each feature was tested appropriately.

Last but not least, our developer played an important role in the SNHU Travel projects success. This was done by communicating with the Tester and Product Owner on any items they needed clarification on so they could write the most efficient code to fit the projects needs. They also quickly adjusted to changes throughout the course of the project and wrote quick, efficient solutions to meet the clients needs.

The Scrum-agile approach to the software development lifecycle helped each of our user stories come to completion, specifically by high involvement of stakeholders and repeatedly monitoring software development while the project was underway. This was accomplished by the user stories being formatted by the Product Owner in an easy to digest way, communicated to the tester and developer and an open line between all team members regarding any questions around the user stories.

A Scrum-agile approach supported the projects completion when we were interrupted and changed direction. This was done by the product owner gathering information from the client about the change of direction, communicating it to the rest of the team and choosing not to push back the deadline. Instead the team adapted, made the updates and delivered within the original specified deadline. A specific example is when the client decided to gear their travel destinations towards detox/wellness. As this was an exciting new opportunity, it was important for the team to adapt, update the current destination options and still deliver within the original deadline.

I have a few examples of communication with team members while I played different roles within the team. As a tester, I formulated a handful of questions on the user stories that were presented to me by the Product Owner. A small sample of the email is as follows “I read through the user stories you sent me and I’m working on developing test cases for each feature. While developing these test cases, I need to determine under what conditions the tests will pass or fail. In order to effectively do this, a little bit more detail will help me clearly define my test cases.” After this introduction, I went into each user story in detail, asking for clarification on whatever was needed. This communication was effective and encouraged collaboration between myself and the Product Owner because it was clear, and constructive in nature. Instead of being critical of the user stories, constructive questions were asked to gain clarification on items, ensuring the user stories were fully captured and not only implemented, but tested as well. Another example of effective communication was when we were given a change of direction and as the developer on the project, I needed some clarification. A small sample of the email is as follows, “With a new focus on detox/wellness destinations does this mean that I should scrap my previous top five destinations that did not have this focus? To put it more clearly, do we want a 100% focus on detox/wellness or should we add those types of destinations into the mix?” This sample communication from the developer to the tester and product owner is an example of encouraging collaboration between the other team members. This sample shows effective communication as well by clearly defining what the developer currently understands and asking questions about how this impacts the current state of the project. By including the tester and product owner, any unforeseen misunderstandings can also be clarified.

Organizational tools and Scrum-agile principles also helped the team to be successful. Organizational tools such as Kanban, Microsoft Azure Boards or Jira, all contribute to the projects success. The primary selling point of these tools is the ability to provide a central source of information regarding the projects current stage in the software development lifecycle and details as to who is working on what, and what needs to be worked on. This helps eliminate a lot of back and forth communication between team members on standard questions such as “what’s been done” and allows for more of a focus of communication on more important items such as making sure user stories are fully realized and implemented into the project.

Throughout the software development lifecycle of the SNHU Travel project the Scrum-agile approach was effective in ensuring success. The pros of this approach are things like constant communication and involvement of stakeholders or users, short sprints with clear goals, an iterative testing and design process, and of course a flexible approach to the design along the way. The only con that stood out to me while working on this project, using an agile approach, was the mindset when a change of course was communicated. I do not agree with the statement “because this is agile, we will continue with this change of course and not change the deadline”. While this is completely situation dependent, some things can only be done within a certain timeframe and budget. It may have to do with how the statement was worded but, one cannot simply state “because this is agile” we will continue with something that may not be possible. There is no harm in trying, but product owners need to be realistic and communicate with their team before making potentially unrealistic promises, this only stresses the team out and can force the team to rush, and that’s when things get missed. For the SNHU Travel project a Scrum-agile approach worked perfectly, due to how the project worked, we were able to quickly adjust to the new direction provided by the client and still meet the original deadline. Also, we were able to collect information from the client and build accurate user stories to structure the site in a way that met the clients expectations.