Southern New Hampshire University

7-2 Final Project Sprint Review and Retrospective

How Scrum Roles Contributed to the Success of the Project

From the initial meeting with Amanda (the client), Christy (the Product Owner) and Ron (the Scrum Master) set the project up for success by following the Scrum process and entering the epic into the backlog, setting up the rest of the Agile team, and getting started on breaking the Epic into User Stories and tests fit for implementation tasks within a Sprint. Christy provided details for the User Stories by interfacing with several target users that provided details about the kind of features and importance of those features that they wanted for the Travel site. This helped the team to estimate the size of the stories and allowed Christy to prioritize the features in the backlog.

How the Scrum-agile approach helps user stories to completion

Because Christy involved the target audience and interfaced directly with the customer, she was able to provide these details to the development team to help form the basis for the user stories. Each of these stories were implemented during Sprints to provide working increments of functionality demonstrating the site to Christy and Amanda during the Sprint reviews, allowing

the team to incorporate feedback along the way. This feedback becomes a multiplicative value-adder for the team and customer as the team better understands what the customer wants, and the customer better understands how to communicate to the team, all helping to deliver maximum value to the customer in minimal time.

How Scrum supported a change in direction for the project

The change to emphasize detox and wellness packages for the SNHU Travel site provides an excellent example of the flexibility of Scrum-agile versus traditional waterfall methods. As this change occurred late in the overall timeline of the project, waterfall may have been entering integration and/or user testing and almost certainly could not have delivered on this feature. Scrum-agile, by contrast, was able to absorb the change with minimal impact to the overall schedule because re-prioritizing the backlog and changing adding, deleting, or modifying stories within the backlog is a normal part of backlog grooming. Combined with the short Sprints tailored for the tight timeline of the project, Scrum easily absorbed the change in direction for the project.

Effective Team Communication

Effective communication should be clear, concise, and if necessary solicit a response (Keates, 2018). The email below is an example of such communication clearly and concisely asking for Christy to provide feedback on several features.

To: Christy

Subject: User Story Clarifications

Dear Christy,

For the Price Limit User Story, we currently envision a drop-down menu to sort by several categories (price low to high, rating low to high, etc.). Should we add rows so that these categories are enumerated for users. Assuming we add those rows, should we then add the ability to click on those rows rather than sort by the drop-down?

For the User Profile, does the travel preferences need to be a separate page accessible from the user profile page, or can the travel preferences simply be on the landing page? Also, should we default all categories to *No Preference* so that we explicitly define all possible categories?

Thanks,

JT

Effectiveness of Scrum Principles

We have discussed many of the advantages provided by Scrum including increased customer collaboration and communication amongst team members, increased feedback loops and incremental value delivery with short Sprints, and the ability to respond to change with minimal impact. There are few negatives applicable to Scrum that aren't also applicable to Waterfall. As an example, a team member leaving this project would have had a significant impact due to the small team size and tight deadline - but the impact would have likely been similar for Waterfall. Scrum can arguably be more challenging to implement in very large projects, but that constraint did not apply to this project.

The SNHU Travel project presented a fast timeline where requirements changed during the project. Because of this, the team took the approach of short two-week Sprints to maximize feedback loops and stakeholder involvement. Statistics show that Agile succeeds three times more often than Waterfall (One Desk, 2013). Given the request to change the emphasis of the Travel packages to wellness/detox shortly before delivery, a waterfall approach would have almost certainly failed to deliver on this feature request, possibly missing out on significant revenue for the customer. Because Agile emphasizes response to change and Scrum provides a

mechanism to absorb user story changes such as this, the team was able to adapt and deliver the requested modification with minimal impact to the overall project.

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References

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