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Sprint Retrospective

Each role on the Scrum-agile Team made key contributions to the success of the SNHU Travel project. The Product Manager communicated project requirements and changes from the customers and prioritized the project backlog, ensuring the final deliverable actually delivered value. The Scrum Master helped facilitate communication and Agile practices within the team by leading Daily Standups and other Scrum events, improving efficiency. The development team of a developer and a tester not only created the final product but communicated effectively with the Product Manager to obtain the necessary information to allow them to deliver the most value to the customer, particularly in light of the customer’s changed request to focus on wellness travel.

The Scrum-agile approach helped create just-in-time planning for user stories and test cases, reducing initial project planning and ensuring work being performed at any specific time aligned with the current project requirements. Open communication between the developers and the Project Manager was particularly important when developing test cases for the Top 10 Trips, trip search page, and the mobile app user stories, as many details needed to be further clarified for specific customer requirements.

The benefits of the Scrum-agile approach were particularly evident when the customer decided to change direction mid-development to focus on wellness travel. Scrum principles of open communication and responsiveness to change allowed this change to quickly pass from the customer to the Product Owner to the development team. The flexibility of the Scrum model allowed the product backlog to be reorganized without significant overhead and the focus of the development team to change immediately to support this change. Less important items were quickly deprioritized, freeing resources.

As mentioned previously, effective communication was key to the success of the project. Consider this email between the Developer, Product Owner, and Tester:

To: Christy, Brian  
CC: Ron

Subject: Wellness Travel Updates

Good Morning,

I am reviewing the changes to project requirements Christy sent and would like to clarify a few points to assess the work required.

Christy – Is the ask still to have custom destination pages for each user? Should they still be able to select other types of travel, i.e. adventure, cruise, etc.?

Brian - If we are no longer including custom destinations by type, what user profile history do you need to be able to access to test destination pages?

Thank you for your help,

Katie

And this email between the tester and the Product Owner:

To: Christy

Subject: User Story Clarifications

Dear Christy,

I have taken a look at your user stories and am developing test cases for the different features to

determine whether the product passes or fails. I need a bit more detail so that I can use more specific metrics to clearly define my test cases. Can you answer the following questions for me?

User Story One

• Do all the “Top 10” trips need to be listed on the same page or should they be listed separately (like with a slideshow—big picture up top and description below)?

• Should the list count down from 10 to 1 or start with #1?

• Are we doing a top-ten list for a specific type of vacation or will it include all types of vacation packages based on popularity?

User Story Two

• What kinds of column headers would you like to see for this option?

• Trip name, location, prices, description—do you also want them to be sortable by user ratings?

• Are we going to allow the user to specify a price range?

• How long are you looking for the description to be? A one-line overview or more comprehensive details?

User Story Three

• For the next user story, you indicate wanting a mobile app. Do we want to include every feature on the mobile app or limit the functionality?

• This user story seems more like an epic that will need to be broken down into smaller components. Can you give more details and wireframes for what you are envisioning here?

Thanks,

Brian

With a direct line to the product owner and other team members, the developer and tester were able to quickly ask for specific information to facilitate the change and direction and make sure that the changes to product requirements were fully understood, as well as coordinate with other team members to ensure changes would not adversely affect their work.

Organizational tools and Scrum-agile principles were also contributed to a successful project. Using JIRA to manage the backlog and sprint board was helpful as the team worked remotely. Using the tool helped keep the team on the same page and was useful to review during the Daily Standup and Sprint Planning events, to ensure everyone was looking at the same thing. This also promoted information transparency within the team, as well as the open communication modeled by the Scrum Master during Scrum events and in emails to the team. The team really adopted this well, and were able to communicate effectively with each other, particularly when responding to customer-driven changes. This was also facilitated by the adoption of Agile principles of embracing variability and using small batch sizes. The team was able to quickly adapt to the changes without needing to start over or change all user stories.

Overall, the Scrum-agile approach proved to be highly effective for the SNHU Travel project. The Scrum-agile principles of openness and embracing change contributed greatly to a successful project. Iterative work done in small batch sizes was key to successful changing course mid-project. I believe Scrum-agile was the best approach for this project. If the project was instead run with a Waterfall approach, the team would have not been able to accommodate changes to the project requirements from the customer nearly as quickly or efficiently, likely resulting in either significant delays to the project, or a final deliverable that did not provide as much value to the customer as what the team was able to deliver.