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CS250 – Module Seven

Final Project: Scrum Review and Retrospective

Each member of the Scrum-agile Team played a vital role in the success of SNHU Travel. This first member to aid SNHU Travel was the Product Owner. With the SNHU Travel project, the Product Owner took charge of finding out what it was the client wanted by asking questions about her vision of the travel destination site, and creating and prioritizing the product backlog for the Scrum Team. After the Product Owner established the product backlog the next team member to take charge is the Scrum Master. The Scrum Master was able to support the team and see each sprint through to completion in the SNHU Travel project by working with the Product Owner to understand what the stakeholders/clients wanted and also understanding what was important in the product backlog. They also worked in the backgrounds doing daily meetings with the development team to gauge how everyone was handling the tasks they were working on, and what needed to be handled to eliminate in roadblocks in their way. The final members of the team are developers and testers—also the development team. During the SNHU Travel project, the development team took the user stories and tackled them based on the level of importance. Each request in the user story was implemented in the way that the client wished until all appeared complete. After that, the next step was to work with testers. The testers used both the user stories and the work of the developers to start the process of comparing what was developed to what the client wanted. It was from here that the tester reached out to development and the Product Owner with additional questions.

The Scrum-agile approach to the software development life cycle helped each user story come to completion in several ways. One, there was enough transparency during the planning phase of the project for everyone on the team to have a glimpse of what was to happen in upcoming springs. Two, the development team had such flexibility with the Scrum-agile approach that if changes happened it only took a daily meeting with the Scrum Master and the proper resources to allow those changes to happen. There was no need to halt the process or change the deadline date. Finally, since testing is done in an environment where testers can reach out to everyone on the team for clarification and guidance, the final product is more likely to be accurate to the client’s wishes. When SNHU Travel wished to change from lists to slides, and then from slides about destinations to slides about wellness centers, there was no need to scrap the entire project or repeat unnecessary processes. As long as the development team received accurate information, they were able to make adjustments to the user stories and specify what needed to happen in the final product in order for it to be considered done. These interruptions and changed directions did not have a major impact because of the Scrum-agile approach. It allowed plenty of room to make improvements because there were no strict deadlines or goals to meet. For example, it did not affect the project to switch out the destination spots in the slide show for wellness/detox centers because unlike the waterfall approach there was freedom to go back to previous steps, make adjustments, and then return to the remaining tasks without issue.

Communication is essential when it comes to the unexpected during a project. A sample of this was in the email from the tester (Brian) to the Product Owner (Christy) in Module Four. The tester was struggling to understand what the metrics were in determining whether the product passed the quality test or if it failed. In the email, the tester asked the Product Owner for specifics about what the final product should do. For example, “Should the list countdown from 10 to 1 or start at #1?” By asking questions like these, the tester can learn what exactly a numbered list is supposed to look like while testing the product. It would probably be wise to CC the developers and Scrum Master, too, so things can remain as transparent as possible. Meetings happen daily, so keeping everyone on the same page to avoid drawn out explanations later on would not only keep things moving smoothly but also keep the team aware of what changes may need to be made after the test is complete.

On top of communication and keeping updates transparent for the team, there are also organizational tools and Scrum-agile principles to ensure success. One such tool is agile estimation. Or, more specifically, the story points method of agile estimation. When looking at the notes gathered from the initial meeting, user stories were formed with a priority level assigned to each one. These priority levels do not put a rigid due date on a task, but provide a means of suggesting which tasks should be tackled before others. This is one of the many reasons why the Scrum-agile approach is so effective. One of the biggest pros of the agile method is the flexibility. Although there are phases and planning involved, changes are not enough to bring a project to a standstill. The ability to break apart the project into different sections for different team members and stagger the due dates rather than expect it all at once allows a company to operate with more freedom. Other pros of the Scrum-agile include the elimination of specialists (everyone can help everyone), room to learn from failures, an environment that welcomes input from all team members, and a schedule that fits the team rather than a schedule team members must fit themselves into. There are not many cons that come to mind when it comes to the Scrum-agile approach, but one possible con is how much education and time it takes to train a company to follow the agile method. A typical job has a head manager, regular managers, supervisors, and then a team of individuals with specific job titles that must do specific things. Adopting the Scrum-agile approach means challenging the norm along with the concept of what a work hierarchy should be. In other words, the success of the Scrum-agile method depends largely on the people involved and their willingness to learn about it. When it comes to the SNHU Travel project, I believe that there is no better method than the agile method. Building a website is almost like building a house. Even when you envision the final product and customize it to your liking in your mind, challenges and changes happen. The agile method embraces change by offering estimations over deadlines, sprints over one strict path, and daily communication to ensure no problems accumulate or impede progress. Methods like the waterfall method are not necessarily “worse” than Scrum-agile. It simply comes down to needing the proper tools for a good. If a job is straightforward and requires sticking to a specific time through the course of the project then the waterfall method works great; however, when you have a project like the SNHU Travel project where the clients vision of the final product often changes throughout the development process then it is ideal to offer them a team of professionals that understand the flexibility and freedom of the Scrum-agile method.