Final Project

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SNHU Travel Agency utilized a scrum agile approach to their software development allowing for rapid change when the stakeholders came forward with a new request. This is a particular strength to agile project management, specifically Scrum which was employed by SNHU travel. Agile is an act of breaking a project down into phases while emphasizing collaboration and improvement. This has taken over as a go do method for product development replacing the waterfall method due to its slow transition to meet market needs. Scrum is now one of the most used agile methods in place today.

User Stories are a core aspect of how agile teams operate. The story created by the end-user or stakeholders describes an action or feature that would benefit the end user/stakeholder. This story comes with a detailed description of why this feature would be of benefit. More importantly, every story has the acceptance criteria, the end goal of the story. The story is broken up into backlogs, or a list of changes and implementations to work on. The backlogs will be broken down into tasks allowing for the story goals to be spread out across sprints and managed. This allows the teams to collaborate to design, build and test to meet the criteria of not just a story but multiple common story points at one time. The teams are composed of developers and testers, who are supported and guided by product owners and scrum masters.

A scrum master oversees that implementation of scrum is followed and maintained throughout the organization. Importance to this role scales greatly with larger organizations once the team starts expanding. The goal of the scrum master is to coach and guide all the teams to maintain a scrum approach and facilitate collaboration.

As a product owner, engagement with the users is critical and requires a series of skills to pull it off effectively. As a Product Owner (PO) you are essentially a product manager but more. Communication is a core skill as you are the point of contact, the guide, and the collaborator for that product. The PO has a vision of how the product should be working, and the teams to see it through. As the visionary PO meets with the end users of the product, this allows the end user to be the voice that can change the product. The PO will gather feedback and feature requests through the end user’s stories. These stories are what drive the backlog of changes to be made on the product. Where the PO really comes to fruition is turning that story and backlog to a plan of action. There are many teams involved in the development of the product and the PO sets what they work on and gives them the direction to achieve it. As the collaborator, the PO guides these teams to meet the requests of the end users.

User stories tell the needs the user has expressed for the software. This indicates a direction the customer would like to see the software feature move forward in. This line of communication provides the needs of the customer the software may be able to incorporate. As a tester, you need to put yourself in the user’s place. Understanding the why and the purpose of the story, is critical as the tester needs to be able to replicate how the user would expect the feature to operate. Working with the developer the two collaborate to ensure the product is developed in a way the stakeholder is expecting. The developer in this case will be coding the product to meet the goals set by the backlogs and story. The developer will often be a part of a team of developers who collaborate to solve a problem. The developer will collaborate with different teams in a department given focus of the backlog, this could mean working with an art asset or even database.

Collaboration is key for agile to work and this is emphasized by the Scrum events framework to help create this environment and maintain it. The use of meetings creates multiple points of interaction and collaboration, this guides the way for teams to seek out and remove blockers by seeking the solutions needed. Meetings are held daily for many team members often at the start of the day, called a standup. Sprints also contain their own meetings for before and after it occurs for the teams to assess and reflect on how the spring could have been improved. Further use of tools like kanban boards and backlog management software allows for teams to operate efficiently from a central tracking point.

SNHU’s choice to employ Scrum in the project planning allowed for the team to rapidly adjust the needs to add new features like the addition of new destination types. Following a waterfall method would not have allowed this change to occur until the original product development cycle was completed. Utilizing scrum the product owner was able to meet with the team and plan for the change to occur in the next sprint. The team can plan out before what would need to change and who to collaborate with to complete the goal. The product owner was able to communicate the story effectively for the tester to be able to see what the changes will affect and what needs to occur, this aids the developers involved. With the use of sprints, communication occurs quickly due to how fresh and recent the backlogs are. This allows for feedback as well as resolving potential blockers to completion. The teams can request more information as communication and collaboration grow over a given story. This choice in development was a best case scenario for SNHU Travel.