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Software Development Lifecycle

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Final Project: Sprint Review and Retrospective

Creating this application for SNHU Travel while simultaneously introducing Scrum to our team has been both challenging and rewarding. The benefits were well worth the extra consideration and extra steps we had to take throughout this project. We have all learned a lot about how Scrum works, as well as our specific roles and responsibilities. Our Product Owner, Christy, did an amazing job of organizing the client’s wants and needs within this application, creating a product backlog, and communicating that information with the rest of the team. She also made sure to quickly communicate any abrupt change requests from the client. She kept us all on task and pointing in the right direction. Ron, our Scrum Master, was an invaluable asset for our team during this project. Not only did he assist Christy with understanding and enacting her duties as the Product Owner, but he also made sure the entire team was constantly learning and growing individually and together. He made himself constantly available for any question concerning Scrum or agile, and he facilitated any Scrum events that he needed to. Specifically, he facilitated the initial Scrum events, setting a great example for what was expected of the rest of the team.

Nicole, our Developer, was quick to pick up the values and processes of Scrum. She was able to make a very good estimate of how much she would be able to get done within a sprint. She kept in effective communication with the rest of the team, and quickly fixed any issues or made any changes that were needed. She delivered the product to our client with strong, modular software that has room for expansion and adheres to software engineering practices. Finally, our Tester, Brian, was able to come up with test cases for every bit of code that was submitted for testing. This helped the team adhere to his tests, which kept them focused on writing code that was functional and simple. He, like the rest of the team, kept in constant communication, especially when he was held up, unsure, or there was a switch-up. Overall, the entire team had meaningful and effective communication, and they all helped keep the team on track and keep momentum.

A Scrum-agile approach to the development lifecycle of this project helped each of the user stories come to completion. Our Product Owner initially organized and prioritized the product backlog. This gave the development bite-sized chunks that they were able to accomplish. Additionally, it helped the team understand exactly what was needed for the application, and allowed them to focus on one little piece of code at a time. Brian, our Tester, also provided test cases that the team could adhere to, which made things very simple and run smoothly. For instance, our user story of providing a top 5 destination list was initially presented by our client to our Product Owner, who then worked it into the product backlog. When the development team decided they could include it in their current sprint, they started working on a prototype. The client abruptly decided they wanted to change the theme of the top 5 list to align with common travel trends. Our development team needed to adjust their code accordingly, while remaining in constant communication with the Product Owner and Tester to actively product a product together. Each of the user stories followed a similar pattern: clear and effective communication between all team members (including clients), timely expression of any uncertainties or concerns, and an attitude that is open and accepting of change.

The example given above is a textbook example of how our team has embraced and implemented Scrum-agile, and how it benefits the software development lifecycle. We were able to give our client exactly what they wanted, even after we had already agreed on a user story and started the development of it. Had we not been able to accommodate the client’s request, the value of our entire project would have decreased dramatically, as it would not have been nearly as effective for our clients against the competition in their field. This perfectly aligns with Scrum’s value of keeping the client first, and valuing their satisfaction above all else. It also exemplifies the necessity for and importance of communication, as well as allowing room for and embracing change.

More specific examples of how our team communicated effectively can be found in the emails that were sent back and forth between all team members during the development of this application. One example of this is when our Tester sent our Product Owner an email expressing his concerns with a lack of detail concerning a few of the initial user stories in order to create test cases consistent with what the Product Owner intended. This helped form the basis for what level of detail was expected for this stage of the sprint. Similarly, the Developer sent an email to the Product Owner to better understand the changes and fine-tuned details that were required for the change of theme requested mid-sprint. This helped the team understand how to better handle abrupt changes like this. This communication was timely and clear, and helped the team build confidence in asking for clarity and become a more efficient team. It also provided more value to the client by ensuring the entire team understood what was expected from the client, and how to properly produce a professional and customized product.

The organizational tools that our team used helped tremendously in communication and keeping us on task. Having a Scrum board that is always available for all team member to see was a great way to stay organized. It was especially helpful during our initial Sprint Planning. We were able to clearly see what we still needed to accomplish and what we already had, which helped us gauge our momentum and the value we were providing to our client. It also helped us during our Daily Standup meetings by allowing us to see quickly and easily who was working on which portion of the project, as well as who had completed previous work. This allowed us to seek out and communicate with the correct person with specific questions or concerns. Using an online tool, such as Jira, will help us in the future because it will allow for everyone to have access to our organizational materials regardless of their location or time. This will help with remote work, and gives us a more organized space with all of our information in one place.

Overall, the team benefited greatly from the implementation of a Scrum-agile approach for the development of the SNHU Travel project. The main advantages would be the ability to change our requirements to better suit our customer, effective and constant communication, and more bite-sized and organized development. Some detriments are that the production of the application was much less predictable than with a plan-driven approach, there is a more subjective definition of “done,” and the overall production process takes more time. However, despite these constraints, I believe that utilizing this approach will greatly benefit ChadaTech moving forward. It was certainly the best approach for this project. As previously stated, our team was able to provide much more value for our client due to the change in requirements mid-sprint. This would not have occurred in a more plan-driven approach. Our company would benefit greatly from agile by continuing to provide similar results for our future clients.

References

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