Sprint Review and Retrospective

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**Sprint Review and Retrospective**

The Scrum-Agile methodology allows for a flexible, rapid pace development process. Portions of the project are broken up into stories, which then become part of a sprint. These sprint items are compartmentalized from other portions of a project, allowing for change to meet a client’s needs. For the SNHU Travel project, the sprint’s primary focus was the creation and revision of the java application which displays the top 5 destinations. Each role in the scrum team was invaluable to the completion of the sprint, as they all work in tandem to ensure that the product fulfills the client’s desires. Within scrum, each of these roles has specific duties to fulfil. This separation of responsibilities results in a team which can still work together to accomplish a task but is capable of transitioning or making revisions in a rapid manner. Combing this team layout with effective communication strategies is key in producing a project methodology capable of merging speed, effectiveness, and flexibility in a way that prior styles, such as waterfall cannot emulate.

# Demonstrate how the various roles on your Scrum-agile Team specifically contributed to the success of the SNHU Travel project.

The roles that make up a Scrum Team are an important part of how the Scrum Team functions together. For the purposes of the SNHU Travel project, we emulated several roles. These roles included: Product Owner, Scrum Master, Developer, and Tester. A Product Owner is an expert on the client’s needs and are empowered to make decisions for the client. (Bush, 2022) In the SNHU Travel Project, the role of a Product Owner was emulated During week 3 in the User Stories assignment. Working as a Product Owner, we utilized a meeting with stakeholders and potential users to come up with a set of User Stories. These stories were then ranked based on priority, before later facing a revision due to the Client’s change request. This prioritization of tasks was integral in ensuring that the SNHU Travel project’s most important features got implemented first. As a Scrum Master in Week 2, we got the opportunity to review a meeting with the client, seeing how the Scrum Master works as a spokesperson for the team. In the same week, the Scrum Master headed up a Daily Standup meeting, making sure that the team members communicated effectively and stayed on track. There were no opportunities for the Scrum Master to insulate the team, or remove impediments, however. In a Scrum Team, the role of Developer is likely the most common. They handle the bulk of the actual programming in a project and their input can be invaluable for the Scrum Master and Product Owner when it comes to stories or backlog items. There were a couple of instances within the SNHU Travel project where we filled the role of a Developer. Whether it was in the 3-3 assignment, creating the initial version of the top 5 destinations, or later in the 5-2 Product Application assignment, where changes were made based on the client’s changes, the tasks completed as a developer resulted in a tangible product which could be displayed to stakeholders and clients. Finally, as a Tester, we helped ensure that there were measurable cases in which the project could be examined. By creating test cases for different user stories, and their revisions, we provided a quantifiable way to test whether the stories were correctly implemented. Each role is vital to the success of an Agile Project.

**Scrum-Agile Approach**

The Scrum-Agile approach was important in ensuring that the user stories came to completion. In the Product Backlog, I ranked various user stories by priority. While we didn’t see some aspects, such as a price sorting feature, or a personalized list come into fruition during this project, the Scrum methodology of breaking these stories up into sprints still leaves room for these different features to make an appearance down the line. This is in contrast with the Waterfall methodology, where everything is sort of locked into place, and failing to implement it now means it will never be implemented.

The Scrum-Agile approach is superior when it comes to project flexibility. After creating the initial mockup of the User Story 1 “Click a link to view the top five destinations list”, the client expressed desires to the Product Owner to move in a different direction. With the assistance of the Product Owner, the Dev team was able to transition from the list format into the slideshow approach with minimal difficulty. The decision to focus in on “health and wellbeing” type vacations may have had more ramifications in a waterfall type project, as the client typically doesn’t see the project until it is completed. The fact that project progress is shared with the Product Owner, and therefore the client/stakeholders, throughout the project gives us the opportunity to change or implement new features without impacting the overall progress of the project too much. (Cobb, pg. 48, 2015)

**Communication**

Effective communication can be invaluable to the success of a project. The best examples of communication in this project are likely my email to the Product Owner, and in the Group Discussion, where we each assumed roles of the Scrum Team. The first line in the Agile manifesto is “individuals and interactions over processes and tools”. (Beck, 2001) From this line, we can see the value that Agile teams put into its members and their ability to cooperate and coordinate with each other. In my correspondence with the Product Owner, I tried to keep my language clear and concise when asking for clarification on various portions of the current sprint goal. I knew that we would be re-making the list, so I wanted to ensure that other features regarding layout and color were implemented at this time as well. In the Group Discussion, however I ended up falling into a bit of a trap. In the initial scrum meeting from module 2, it’s clear that the product owner isn’t present at the meeting, and generally isn’t expected to be there. As I assumed the role of Product Owner, I felt it wasn’t my place to enforce daily standups for the rest of the team despite seeing the value and coordination that they could offer. This was a mistake, as in a real-world scenario, I would have been depriving the team of valuable time that they could have spent organizing and collaborating. The team members were likely afraid of standard meetings which get bogged down by middle management, and those types of impediments aren’t present in an Agile Environment.

**Organizational Tools and Scrum-Agile Principles**

The Agile Manifesto Principles and Scrum Values helped make my team successful on the SNHU project. The Agile Manifesto prioritizes several things: “Individuals and Interactions, Working Software, Customer Collaboration, and Responding to Change”. (Beck, 2001) By prioritizing individuals and interaction, we ensured that we had open communication throughout the team and could coordinate well. By prioritizing working software, we were able to deliver a functional destination list in under a week. By collaborating with the Customer and responding to change, we were able to make a revision and deliver something that the customer truly valued, ensuring that we ended up with a happy client.

Our organizational tools were critical to the success of the project. By forming a team charter, we ensured that everyone would have time for a daily standup and outlined communication expectations. The product backlog and user stories helped to outline and prioritize tasks so that we could focus on the real core of the project, the destinations list. The test cases helped to ensure that the deliverables were accurate and functional. These tools reinforce the Agile principles, as effective code is the goal, and communication is required to effectively utilize them.

**Effectiveness of the Scrum-agile approach for the SNHU Travel project**

The scrum-agile approach featured several pros and cons during the project. One of the main pros was that we were able to effectively distribute the project and its responsibilities across the team due to the use of user stories and sprints. Another pro is that daily standups opened an easy line of communication for team members to coordinate on different portions of the project. Lastly, due to agile, we were able to remain flexible and meet the client’s change in taste partway through the project. There were several things that could also be considered cons, however. In the case of this project, a lot of us are inexperienced and could be considered Junior Developers. This hampered team organization due to the general lack of experience on our end. (Cobb, pg. 197, 2015) Another con is that the client ended up making us do “more” work. In a waterfall project, we’d have a contract for what the client wanted, and we’d deliver that. Changes to the project like they requested here would have been an additional contract and hopefully would have allotted for more time. A final con would be that in our group discussion, the ”ranking” system is unclear. In a waterfall project, the project manager could have implemented daily standups, and there wouldn’t really be room for discussion by team members, but we ended up caving to another individual’s demands due to the more democratic process of Agile.

A scrum-agile approach was likely the best methodology to use for this project. Up until the first snag of the client changing the format and composition of the project, there likely wouldn’t have been a big difference between the two. However, snags like that are inevitable and a great example of why flexibility wins out over the traditional processes. The ability for the team to hit a setback like that, then adapt and overcome, delivering a product which the client can really resonate with is a great example of why agile is taking over in the professional space.

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