Sprint Review and Retrospective

Nicholas Olson

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Instructor: Tarik Iles

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Throughout the development of the SNHU Travel booking software, each Scrum-Agile team role, Product Owner, Scrum Master, Developer, and Tester, contributed uniquely to the project’s success. As Scrum Master, my role was to guide the process, ensure the team followed Scrum principles, and facilitate events such as Daily Scrums, Sprint Reviews, and Retrospectives. The Product Owner, Christy, defined the project vision and prioritized the Product Backlog, focusing the team’s attention on the highest-value features, such as the pivot toward detox and wellness travel.

The Developer, Nicky, transformed user stories into working functionality, collaborating closely with the Tester to align coding and validation tasks. Meanwhile, the Tester, Brian, ensured that acceptance criteria were clearly defined, developed, and met before deployment. Each role upheld the principles of transparency, inspection, and adaptation, ensuring continuous feedback and improvement across sprints.

The collaboration between these roles allowed us to maintain momentum despite limited time and shifting client priorities. For example, when SNHU Travel redirected the product focus to wellness vacations, Christy reorganized backlog priorities, and the Developer and Tester rapidly adjusted their tasks and test cases. This demonstrated Agile’s flexibility and team synergy in responding to change rather than adhering to a fixed plan.

A Scrum-Agile approach directly influenced the successful completion of user stories for the SNHU Travel project. The Product Owner’s stories followed the format “As a [type of user], I want to [perform some task] so that I can [achieve some goal],” enabling the team to empathize with end users while focusing on value delivery. For example, one story, “As an end user, I want destination recommendations customized to my travel profile so that I only see locations relevant to my interests”, clearly connected user need to functionality, guiding the Developer’s design and Tester’s validation process.

Sprint Planning sessions ensured that each story had measurable acceptance criteria, which provided a basis for both coding and testing efforts. Backlog Refinement meetings further supported user-story completion by clarifying details and preparing stories that met the Definition of Ready. This iterative cycle ensured that each increment of software provided tangible value while minimizing rework.

Through continuous feedback from the Product Owner and Tester, the development process maintained strong alignment with user expectations. Each increment was reviewed in Sprint Reviews, allowing stakeholders to provide early feedback, while Sprint Retrospectives identified areas for process improvement. This incremental and adaptive rhythm ensured progress toward the project’s ultimate goal: a functional niche travel booking tool.

One of the most defining moments in the SNHU Travel project was the mid-sprint pivot to focus on detox and wellness travel. In a traditional waterfall model, this would have caused major setbacks, requiring redesigns and extensive documentation updates. However, Agile’s flexibility allowed the team to adapt seamlessly.

During the team meeting, Christy announced the strategic shift, and instead of scrapping prior work, the Scrum-Agile framework allowed the team to reprioritize backlog items and continue development within the same timeline. The Scrum Master facilitated discussions to assess feasibility, and the Developer evaluated which features could be updated without delay. The Tester then modified test cases to reflect new acceptance criteria.

This adaptability demonstrated Agile’s resilience and iterative strength. The team preserved its schedule, maintained morale, and delivered a refined product aligned with evolving business needs—evidence that Scrum principles of transparency and collaboration are well suited to dynamic environments.

Effective communication was the backbone of the SNHU Travel Agile process. Daily Scrums encouraged open dialogue about progress, impediments, and next steps, ensuring consistent team alignment. The Scrum Master ensured each meeting stayed focused on the three guiding questions: What did I do yesterday? What will I do today? Are there any impediments in my way?

Digital tools like Slack and Jira facilitated asynchronous updates, backlog tracking, and progress visualization, while email and Zoom were used for escalations and detailed clarifications. For instance, the Developer emailed the Product Owner and Tester to clarify new data fields and acceptance criteria during the wellness travel update. Similarly, the Tester’s email request for clarification on seasonal availability and performance standards enhanced collaboration and reduced rework.

These examples of transparent, respectful communication reflect Agile values of collaboration over documentation and responding to change over following a plan. Each interaction contributed to a culture of openness and accountability that supported continuous improvement.

Organizational tools such as Jira, Slack, and visual Scrum boards were instrumental in promoting team efficiency and transparency. Jira enabled real-time tracking of sprint progress, backlog refinement, and linking of user stories to test cases. Slack served as the primary communication channel for rapid updates and problem-solving, while daily stand-ups and retrospectives ensured continuous alignment.

Scrum events—Sprint Planning, Daily Scrums, Sprint Reviews, and Retrospectives—created predictable cadences for collaboration. Backlog Refinement maintained clarity, while Sprint Reviews gave stakeholders visibility into product evolution. These tools and ceremonies supported the Agile pillars of transparency, inspection, and adaptation and ensured that all members, from Product Owner to Tester, worked with shared knowledge and accountability.

Overall, the Scrum-Agile approach proved highly effective for the SNHU Travel development project. Pros included flexibility in handling change, continuous stakeholder feedback, early issue detection, and improved cross-functional collaboration. Agile encouraged the team to deliver small, valuable increments while remaining aligned with the client’s evolving vision. Furthermore, open communication and adaptive planning fostered a strong sense of team ownership and mutual respect.

Cons involved the learning curve for new Agile practitioners, occasional ambiguity in defining story scope, and the pressure of maintaining tight sprint timelines. Despite these challenges, Agile principles empowered the team to navigate uncertainty successfully.

Given the project’s dynamic scope, tight deadlines, and evolving requirements, Scrum-Agile was clearly the most suitable methodology. A waterfall approach would have hindered adaptability and delayed feedback loops, resulting in higher risk and lower user satisfaction. The SNHU Travel case highlights how Agile not only accelerates delivery but also enhances product quality through collaboration, transparency, and continuous refinement.

# References

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