CS-250 Final Project Retrospective

Rob Marlatt

Southern New Hampshire University

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During the course of the SNHU Travel project, I took on each of the different roles in an Agile Scrum team. The first role was as the Scrum Master. As a Scrum Master, it is your role to ensure that the project moves along smoothly with little to no interference. As a Scrum Master, I made sure that the Daily Scrum Meeting stayed on schedule, and also ensured that the team was prioritizing items from the Product Backlog. I also would ensure that the team set out the rules of conduct for themselves and created the Team Charter explaining the rules of conduct and each team member’s role.

The next role that I took on was that of Product Owner. The Product Owner is the point of contact between the Development team and the client. As the Product Owner, I was responsible for creating the user stories after meeting with the SNHU Travel team. I set up the user story chart and prioritized the items on it, to give the Development team items for the Product Backlog. I would also be responsible for meeting with the Travel team to discuss the changes that they made to their requirements for the product.

Next, I took on the role of Tester. As a Tester, it is your responsibility to ensure that the product is free of errors and meets the client’s requirements. As the Tester for the SNHU Travel team, it was my responsibility to contact the Product Owner to receive clarification on what options the client wanted, how it was to be implemented and what features they did not want, in order to not waste resources. In my email to the Product Owner, I stated: “I've reviewed your user stories, and I'm creating test cases for the various functionalities to see if the product succeeds or fails. I need a little more information so that I may define my test cases properly using more precise metrics. Could you please respond to the following queries for me?” I then proceeded to ask questions about each User Story to ensure that the product would meet the demands of the SNHU Travel team.

The final role I took on was that of Developer. In the SNHU Travel project, I was responsible for writing the code for the project. I used some existing code, and then implemented the ideas that SNHU Travel had for the project, based on the user stories. I was also responsible for making sure that the Product Owner was clear on what was needed, and what was not needed for the project, so that there were no unnecessary changes or delays. This kept the project on track and in budget, according to the project estimates we created.

With a Scrum-Agile approach, there are several steps in the Sprint cycle that contribute to the methodology’s success. The first step is Planning, where the Product Backlog is used to decide what items will be worked on during the Sprint. Next is Analysis and Design. These steps are used to assign different user stories to the team members, and decide how they are going to be implemented. Next comes Implementation, where the team puts together all the parts they worked on and adds them to the existing product. Next the product goes through Testing and Integration, where the product is tested to be error-free and added to the finished product. Finally, Maintenance is performed on the entire project, to ensure that all the parts meet the client’s needs. Then the cycle repeats.

Using a Scrum-Agile approach to the SNHU Travel project was crucial to completing the project. In the middle of creating the website changes, the client requested that the project have several changes made. If we had used a waterfall model, those changes would not have been incorporated until the final product was almost ready, causing delays and inefficiencies in the project. With the Scrum-Agile approach, the Product Owner was contacted by the client with the changes. The Product Owner informed the team of the changes, and they were able to immediately implement them. This keeps the project on track and the client happy with the product.

During the course, I was tasked with helping on a group discussion about a case study for Vision Quest Software. I took on the role of Tester for the project. In my part of the discussion, I asked questions of each team member specific to the role they were playing, to ensure that my testing requirements met the standards of the case study. I wanted to know what the Scrum Master considered to be success standards for each Sprint. I asked the Product Owner what measures of success that the client had. I also asked the Developer what formats they wanted testing reports and error logs to be in so that they understood the information they were given. I believe this helped the project greatly, in that there would be clear standards and goals to meet for the project, and that the Tester knew exactly how to test the project.

I believe that the organizational tools that we used during the course, such as the User Story template and the Use Cases, were crucial to the success of our project. The User Story template allowed us to see what the client was looking for, and what standards needed to be met. The Use Cases allowed us to determine the exact requirements for the testing process, and how to ensure success cases for the project. Other organizational tools, such as Jira, would help with making sure the Product Backlog was maintained, be able to keep track of Scrum Meeting notes, and provide scheduling information for the team. This ensures that the entire team is on the same page as far as what has been done, and what still needs to be done. The principles that helped the team to be successful were the idea that changes can be made during the Sprint, that testing should be concurrent with development, and that the Product Owner be in close contact with the client, as well as the team, to ensure that the needs of the client are met.

The SNHU Travel project was a success because the team followed the Scrum-Agile methodology. If the team had followed the Waterfall model, the changes that the client wanted could not have been implemented as quickly as possible, since the entire Waterfall model would have to be completed before the changes could be made. That does not mean that the Scrum-Agile approach has no shortcomings. For a simple project such as the SNHU Travel project, the Waterfall model could have still been used, since the time to completion was so short. The Agile model actually could hinder the project, since there are so many steps involved, such as creating a Product Backlog, and creating a Team Charter for such a small project. These added complexity to the project, increasing the time needed to complete. Overall, though, for most projects, the Scrum-Agile methodology will still be the best route for software development on a larger scale.