**Sprint Review & Retrospective: SNHU Travel**

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We have completed the Scrum for the final SNHU Travel program release. For this project, we used the agile methodology rather than the company's usual waterfall style. From how the different roles apply to user stories and changes in direction, we will evaluate all the changes in the process.

When it comes to roles for the team, there are three positions: the product owner, Scrum master, developers, and testers, all with their purposes. The product owner handles the backlog. “Priority, risk, value, learning opportunities, and dependencies are all taken into account and balanced with each other.” (Overeem, 2016). This is done with lots of communication with the developers, as they are the ones who figure out how much time each task needs to be completed. The product owner also holds discussions with both the customer and stakeholders to make sure that the true needs and wants are developed into the program or product that will be delivered. Next, the Scrum master acts as a sort of coach and helper to the developers and testers. They understand team development and do what the team needs to ensure a cohesive environment. For instance, they will be a go-between for the team and the rest of the company to ensure that there are limited interruptions and tasks that are not relevant to the current sprint. The developers and testers work very closely in the agile world. This is rather beneficial as there is an iterative process and a continued release of a working product for the customer. This also allows for less opportunity for a failing product at the end of the run, which costs the company lots of time and money. The idea behind the agile process is that the tester and developers will work together with paired programming to ensure automated tests that will continue to run anytime the code is updated to free up more time for other tasks.

One of the major parts of the agile environment is the product backlog. This is done with user stories. A user story is a task that needs to be completed. It is clear, concise, and has very specific pass/fail requirements to know whether it has been completed or not. Each user story is considered incomplete until it is fully complete; there is no halfway processing. The software development life cycle relies on user stories to tell the developer and tester exactly what the customer is looking for, it takes out all the ambiguity to make sure the finished product is exactly what the customer both wants and needs. In this SNHU Travel project, we had a user story stating how the customer wanted a top-five destination list on their website. The exact requirements were rather clear: to have a working link, a slideshow-style display, a photo, and a brief description of each location. This was great as we knew exactly what to program and when to know if it worked, to release to the customer.

In the middle of our project, the customer pivoted based on new information that they had gathered from the market. In the original waterfall method, a pivot change mid-project could render all the work that had been done so far obsolete. This would cost the company a ton of money and push back the release date by at least a couple of months. However, with this agile method, most of our work was still useful. We simply pivoted with the customer to deliver the new product they wanted within the same timeline. In this case, it went from a recommended destination list of general vacations to health and wellness destinations.

Communication was key throughout this whole project. We needed the product owner to create new backlog items that would reflect the new tasks of the customer. The Scrum master will help the developers and testers by making sure they have whatever they need to complete each sprint in the time we allotted for that run. The development team would communicate with us if there were any questions. For example, we wanted to create an app as well, but the whole user story was for the app in general. The developers made sure to contact myself and the product owner to state that there needed to be more information about what the app needed. If it would be more streamlined, or if it needed to contain all the information that the website contained.

In older projects, we used a brick-and-mortar style organization and communication between teams. For this project, I decided to use Jira to help our team stay organized. The benefits of this are that the team can work in a hybrid environment and the customer to stay updated on the project. We can all track progress, who is working with what, new backlog items, and percentages. We can also use Jira to create reports for post-production and project consumption. We can track tasks by people or applications. We can see the project as a whole or, for instance, everything that developer A is working on.

Throughout this project, we had ups and downs as every project does. In the end, I would say that the agile process was the preferred approach for the SNHU Travel development project. As mentioned previously, there was a relatively large shift in where the product was headed halfway through the process. Without the agile process, we would have had to completely restart our code and push back the delivery date. Since we were using this new agile process, we were able to shift with the customer without wasting any time. The cons for this project reflected more the newness of all team members to the agile process rather than the process itself.

**References**

Overeem, B. (2016, April 15). *Characteristics of a great scrum team*. InfoQ. <https://www.infoq.com/articles/great-scrum-team/>