For this project I was tasked with creating a new travel website for an existing travel company. To do this I embarked on a journey to create a scrum team and try out and fill those roles as needed to complete the project. The exploration into each role gave me insights on how a true scrum team handles prep for projects and sprints as well as navigating the development and testing of the product. But first I had to get my head around the roles associated with all that work.

The major roles on the scrum team are as follows, the Scrum Master, the Product Owner, the Developers, and the Testers. To start with, the Scrum Master functions as the coach for the team. They are the experts on how to apply and practice Scrum and are responsible for ensuring that the team functions efficiently and effectively. (Sutherland & Schwaber, 2020) In essence they keep the team motivated and use the tools of the scrum framework to make sure that everything is running smoothly not just for the team but also between the team and the stakeholders.

Which brings me to the development team that the Scrum Master serves. The team is made up of two major roles that I will discuss separately, the Developer(s) and the Tester(s). As the scrum guide says Developers are responsible for creating the usable increment in each sprint. (Sutherland & Schwaber, 2020) Meaning, they are primarily concerned with creating the content that can complete user stories, make a plan to do so, and ensure that the definition of done is upheld in completing their work. (Sutherland & Schwaber, 2020) They will often collaborate with other members of the team either in the same role or outside of it. Frequently they will need clarification when taking on a user story and will need to reach out to the Product Owner or they might want to partner with the testers to get feedback on how they will be testing their code. It is a role that must be very flexible and the one I would want the most. The other side of the coin is the Tester. Which are in fact just other developers. However, they are primarily responsible, as the name implies, for testing the content created by the developers. They will coordinate with the product owner, the client, and even end users to create tests. These tests are not only created to ensure the functionality of the code but also that it adheres to the user stories.

While the user stories are decided on by everyone the role that is most associated with them is actually the Product Owner. They have their plate full, they will be responsible for developing and communicating the Product Goal, creating and communicating the Product Backlog items, ordering Product Backlog items, and ensuring the Product Backlog is visible and understood. (Sutherland & Schwaber, 2020) But that’s not all they are also the liaison to the client and the stakeholders of the project. I like to think of them as the ultimate communicator. The whole team has to respect their decisions because they are the one with the ultimate responsibility to the project.

When it came to completing the user stories as a developer I was aided by the work I did as a product owner. Sprint planning involved having a meeting with potential users to get a sense of the features they wanted to be implemented. The product owner made notes and created the user stories based on input from the users. These user stories allowed me to take the complex features the users desired and have them broken into manageable tasks. This allowed me to deliver it incrementally like when I created the first top ten list. Then that was checked for viability before moving onto the next task in the sprint backlog. I think this allowed for a compartmentalization of the tasks so that team members could deal with interruptions gracefully and flexibly.

Handling Interruptions:

Due to the breaking down of a project into smaller bites it allows the team to adapt easily to changing requirements. The product owner might come in and have a new feature or direction that the project needs to go in based on updated requirements. The beauty of Agile and Scrum specifically is that the team can deal with this and keep going without much lost time or scrambling. In the SNHU Travel Project we dealt with this when the client came back with the requirement that they wanted to focus on spa and detox vacation packages. This was a substantial change in the content we had already created but the underlying structure of the website didn’t need to be altered. It had already been setup I just had to add the new content so the change did not cause all that much of an interruption to the flow of the project.

All of this would be impossible without clear lines of communication throughout the entire team. Much of the outside communication is handled through the Product Owner and is then disseminated to the team through a variety of communication tools. The most obvious being the daily stand-ups. These meetings, while not always directly involving the Product Owner, are a time when updates to the backlog are discussed and the Scrum Master can get a read of how the team is feeling. It is also a good time to address issues the team is having and what everyone’s plan for the day is going to be. Another good communicators are the sprint reviews much like what I am writing here. These allow the team to have a document that let’s them know what went well and what could be improved upon for future sprints. Like in my small team while we did a good job communicating with each other, I wish responses could have been more immediate. Partially I think this was due to the medium we were communicating in (a forum like structure) and partially that we were not in the same room. That is the nature of online learning though.

We definitely could have used some better organizational tools. I was able to research how tools like Jira and other Agile organization tools work. This helped me understand their importance to the agile process. They provide a resource that can house much of the information about the projects progress as well as a communication tool to easily update the team and stakeholders of progress toward the Product Goal. Tools like this are great disseminators of communication.

What I can say about the Agile process is that first and foremost it is flexible. The continuous feedback and incremental progress allows for the sustained progress toward the Product Goal. The iterative nature of Scrum allows us to incorporate client input regularly so that the product meets their needs. It can be prone to the project encompassing too much and trying to be everything for everyone. This is what the Product Owner is for though so they can counteract this potential scope creep. We did not run into this with the SNHU Travel project though changes were manageable and made sense in their industry. Since we had to deal with these changes that came up suddenly the Scrum/Agile approach suited this project well. But for a stable project where all requirements are known upfront another method might be more effective.

The experience of creating this project gave me great insights into the roles and dynamics of a Scrum Team. I see now how the defined roles of Scrum Master, Product Owner, Developer, and Tester contribute to the success of the project. The clear communication and adaptability of the Scrum approach was evident in the SNHU Travel project. Overall, this project gave me the understanding of the strengths of the Scrum methodology and how it aids in managing dynamic and evolving projects.

**References**

Sutherland, J., & Schwaber, K. (2020). *The 2020 Scrum Guide TM*. Scrum Guides. Retrieved June 21, 2024, from https://scrumguides.org/scrum-guide.html