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Sprint Review and Retrospective

Utilizing an agile approach to software development, with incorporated Scrum team methodologies, made the overall production process organized, more efficient, and simpler throughout. The framework presented by Scrum-agile process principles offers a level of flexibility and openness that is often crucial to the prosperous advancement of a project as well as the management of a well-rounded development team. Many of the elements included in this way of running a production not only foster a comfortable working environment (which leads to more productive staff) but also conceptualizes every layer of the project in a way that allows all members involved with the process to understand and assist in creating a product that efficiently and effectively meets the customer’s requirements. By implementing agile methods such as Scrum-based events and roles, open and transparent communication, organizational tools, and Scrum-agile principles, work on the SNHU Travel project was ordered, structured, and thoroughly successful.

Within the structure of the Scrum method, there are many roles that contributed to the success of the SNHU Travel project. The product owner, who acted as a liaison between the business persons and the development team, was extremely effective in ensuring the success of the project. By properly managing and grooming the product backlog to guarantee efficient workload dispersion as well as creating personalized user stories to communicate the requirements to the team, the product owner essentially carried much of the organizational effort attributed to the project. Another role, the scrum master, acted as a loose leader for the development team. Experienced with scrum and agile methodologies, this guide was responsible for giving the development team whatever they needed to succeed as well as mitigating any obstacles that might get in the way of their efforts. The developers were the meat of the team; writing code and creating the actual product in increments that were approved by the client and the product owner. Finally, testers, skilled in QA assessment, were involved with the creation of test cases from the user stories which allowed developers to tailor their creation specifically towards passing tests and increasing quality.

User stories were particularly helpful in assuring the rapid and efficient completion of the SNHU Travel project. Created by the product owner based on requirements agreed upon by the client, these individual and personalized elements were given to the development team in order to form a connection to the requirements and ensure that all the necessary preconditions were met while the product itself was being created. User stories included a name, a priority, a brief description, and then a list of components that were necessary to ensure that the specifications of that particular element were met in entirety. Additionally, user stories were used by testers to formulate test cases which were then used by developers to create better functionality earlier on in the process.

In any project, there is a chance that, mid-development, a change will be necessary. The uncertainty of this is particularly well-managed in an agile environment. For example, while working on the SNHU Travel project, the client expressed a wish to change to health and wellness style vacations as the focus of the site. Though user stories and test cases had already been developed, since work was being done in iterations, it was easy to plan to incorporate the change in the next sprint. Minor shifts in the coding work being done were easily communicated throughout the development team and larger reworks were folded into the Scrum process through updated user stories, new test cases, and discussion during daily stand-ups. Agile encourages and embraces changes to the plan and allows such changes to be made in a way that, in this case, had little to no effect on the timeline already established.

One of the most key principles of Scrum-agile methodology is open and transparent communication across all levels of the development team. For example, when the tester working on the Travel project had questions about the user stories submitted to be made into test cases, the solution was to reach out to the product owner for clarification via email. The tester asked specific, pointed questions to clarify any concerns that the user stories might have created as well as to ensure that all elements of the information were understood to make test cases that contributed positively to the project. A user story involved a list of relevant vacation suggestions to be created according to a user’s interests and profile and the questions posed by the tester were as follows: “What elements of the user profile, specifically, will be used to determine relevance? Should the list pop up in an alternate window or should the page itself reload? If two vacations are of equal relevance, how should they be organized into the list? Do you want to include a link to the booking page with the other elements indicated?” By ensuring the questions were directly related to points on the submitted user stories, the tester was able to glean distinct answers that helped guide the test case creation through transparent and comfortable communication.

Another hugely helpful element of Scrum-agile are the available organizational tools that are used for varying reasons such as to track the progress of a project or maintain team morality when a rough patch occurs. The most useful tool would be the information radiator which refers to a variety of methods that are responsible for keeping the project information and tasks together, updated and available to everyone. Scrum boards, for in-person team meetings, with removable sticky notes that designate various tasks are popular as well as online versions in which each individual team member can contribute to the updating and preservation of necessary information. Additionally, useful charts such as a burn-up chart are a great visual way to track what’s been done, what needs to be done, and how well the progression of completion is sticking to the timeline. They can also be particularly motivating for the team to see the chart slowly rising towards the final apex finishing point; especially if all team members are invested in seeing the chart to its finish.

Throughout the life of the SNHU Travel project, utilization of Scrum-agile methodologies has made the production process smooth and ensured, at every level, that all elements were being created and implemented as efficiently as possible. The customer-development team relationship was based on the values of openness and transparency encouraged by this method and the business value was carefully maintained by the product owner. Team closeness was encouraged through constant communication (despite geographical distances) and a mutual understanding of how the project was intended to proceed. Throughout the process, failure was inevitable and encouraged because it was how the team learned to do things properly, both now and in the future. The flexibile and encouraging environment built by the agile framework that was implemented, allowed the entire team, from top to bottom, to work closely to create something that exactly met the client’s requirements.

Ensuring openness and transparency in all parts of a project, executing Scrum-based principles and events, and accurately using proper organizational tools, has allowed the overall development of the SNHU Travel project to be completed in a timely, accurate, and orderly manner. Many of the resources that denote an agile process, such as user stories, test cases, the various roles of project management, and communication tools, allowed an effective forward momentum to be developed. By creating an open and encouraging environment that promoted failure and interpersonal skills, the SNHU Travel project team was put in the best position to successfully embark on this product journey. Basically, implementing an agile methodolgy for software develompement projects, even if it’s only partially, improves the streamlining goals and timeline efficiency of any production undertakings.