**Final Retrospective**

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Throughout this course, I’ve personally learned a great deal about the varying perspectives and responsibilities when it comes to the Agile approach to product development. When we look at the Agile compared to the Waterfall approach, it would be like comparing a car to a river. A car can be altered and moved forwards or backwards as required while a river just flows and can only be stopped. The Agile methodology is something that can handle the time we live in and is the moldable clay that society craves. It has a powerful emphasis on teamwork and communication with each role playing a vital part throughout the development.

One of the roles of the agile process is the product owner who plays a more manager styled role. The product owner looks after the business side of the product by approving the changes being made and helps play a guiding role through the development of the product. They also work closely with the shareholders or clients to make sure they are moving the product in the right direction to meet their expectations. Another role is the scrum master who can be translated into a supervisor-like role. They are responsible for holding the daily meetings, help to fine tune the product backlog, participate and guide sprint planning, and they assist in communication between the product owner and the development and testing team. They make sure to clear the road in a sense of anything that comes up by maintaining clear levels of communication and evaluate any problems that are coming to rise in the development cycle. The next roles in the agile process would consist of the testers and the developers. They can sometimes be grouped together depending on the scale of the product being developed. The developers are solely responsible for meeting their sprint goals by developing and reporting the progress they have made on the product. The testers are responsible for making the acceptance criteria for each product backlog item to help guide the developers for what is to be accepted for the final product.

Without all these roles together, the SNHU project could have taken way longer in terms of making changes and meeting customer expectations. During the initial phase, an ensured level of product was helped by the product owner meeting with the shareholders to discuss the direction we were planning and what they would like to see. This drastically improves the chances of a successful product launch by not locking in the company’s vision. The scrum master helps throughout the design process by assisting in all of the developer’s obstacles and makes sure that the work that needs to be taken care of immediately is prioritized. This prevents wasted efforts and allows for the developers to focus on what they need to take care of specifically. The testers also play a drastic role by helping to create the testing criteria for what is to be accepted. It helped me to figure out all the questions that would need to be asked based on the somewhat vague criteria that can be passed down to make sure everyone fully understands what is being asked. This prevents confusion and improves the workflow.

Throughout the project, user stories were created and met with various criteria that had to be met to be completed. These were generated milestones that were constantly updated and sometimes removed depending on the updates between all the team members. Having the agile roles in places helped drastically in being able to stay on top of this constant change and be able to prepare for it. The Scrum – Agile approach allowed for consistent communication and manageability by having a daily scrum meeting providing progress updates testers fine-tuning what needs to be accomplished for each user story. This is heightened even more so by constant communication between the testers and the scrum master or even the product owner to make sure all criteria are 100% understood. This had to be done several times during the SNHU Travel Project as I had to make sure I fully comprehended what the Product owner gained from what the shareholders were asking and if we wanted to pursue each of areas of interest they wished for.

Each of the roles allowed me to really place myself in how they would interact with each other and how the changes would affect each role as it was passed down. One of the biggest and most important things that I had to do for a majority was creating email correspondence while attempting to create and write acceptance criteria for the product backlog. Here is an example email from when we had to change direction completely from top five vacation destination listings to top five detox and wellness vacation listings.

“Christy, what kind of changes need to be made to the overall design of the program or are we simply altering the destinations? Should we plan to keep those designs already in place and use them soon if the time allows or discard?

Brian, I understand you are working on updating the test cases already. I would just like to be updated on what you decide to use for the changes to make the proper corrections on my end.

I believe it is of upmost importance to make sure we are all on the same page going forward to avoid any unnecessary work and allow for an increased level of quality. If you have any other question, please contact me via email or we can discuss any additional questions in the next meeting.”

Being able to maintain this level of correspondence is crucial to prevent wasted time and work efforts.

The daily scrum meeting is in my opinion one of the most important organizational tools that can be used and applied to the Scrum agile approach. This allows groups to come together and discuss what they have accomplished and what they need to be accomplished in their current standing. This allows for advice or can provide insight on how things may need to be changed to create a healthier workflow. White boards are also a crucial tool among the entire process as even though it was just me playing each part, it would be equivalent to having all of my work and tasks on display to show exactly where I’m at on each item. This allows everyone to see where they are and where I am to create equality. Respect and integrity are some of the key aspects that would lead to a successful product development. These principles would allow for cooperative teamwork and making sure everyone is owning up to where they really are to allow smooth transitions. A few other key principles that would go hand in hand is good time management skills and being organizational.

The Scrum agile approach had quite a few pros and applied itself perfectly to the SNHU project. The only cons I could think of is that the estimation would be substantially longer due to the acceptance of change and flexibility throughout the project. Another con would be the sudden implementation of agile approach could be daunting to the organizational structure causing some lags in the initial launch. The pros, however showed a great deal of improvement for this project as the flexibility attributed greatly when another direction was chosen suddenly towards the tail end of the product. It allowed for each team member to have a voice and take ownership of their accomplishments for each sprint iteration. This approach also allowed for collaboration with the shareholders to improve chances of success as the product moved along. Obstacles were able to be addressed and tested for acceptance at every stage of development. Their also seemed to constant communication between all levels allowing for every associate to be a level field and be able to have clear and concise direction no matter what is being worked on. I believe this approach is a strategic way to tackle development cycles and could be applied to quite a few different aspects out there in the world.