**Module 7: Final Project**

Taylor Jones

CS-250-11469-M01

Professor Ulucay

August 17, 2024

**Review and Retrospective: Applying Roles**

On a Scrum Team, every role provides crucial contributions in ensuring the success of the overall project. In retrospect, I noticed the three pillars of Scrum being demonstrated throughout taking on each role. Transparency was demonstrated in encouraging everyone to take accountability around what they did yesterday, what they’re doing today, and what is impeding them. Inspection was demonstrated through an iterative approach to the sprint where the SNHU Travel program changed over time. Adaptation was demonstrated as the team pivoted to adapt to the changing needs of the project such as when the focus was shifted to wellness vacations.

As a Scrum Master, I learned that it is my responsibility to keep the team organized and focused on the tasks at hand. The example of the Scrum Master removing an obstacle for her team in the form of getting blinds installed so that screen glare would no longer be an issue stood out to me. The blinds example demonstrates that sometimes solving problems for the team will come in interesting and unexpected forms and have a big impact in the day-to-day life of your team members. Scrum Masters are also responsible for facilitating the Scrum process which can take on the form of a meeting facilitator, problem solver, and even a team protector in some cases to prevent interruptions. It falls on Scrum Masters to ensure that the appropriate practices are followed; simply sticking to a fifteen-minute timer for Daily Standups is one way to maintain discipline, but it’s equally important to ensure that all time spent is productive by encouraging collaborative discussion.

As a tester I learned that my main responsibility is to ensure that the team is producing a high-quality product. Throughout this course, I think my biggest takeaway for the tester role was the importance of collaborating with developers and product owners to understand what is required of the product. You can’t possibly test a product or provide feedback in an effective way if you do not know what it is supposed to do. Once you understand how the product is intended to behave, testers can begin developing test cases based on user stories to provide valuable feedback to the team in every phase of the sprint.

Being a developer on a Scrum team means working closely with other team members to understand the requirements of the product, estimating how long it will take to complete, and delivering high quality software that functions to product specifications. One thing that I took away from our course content was how important it is to ask questions around understanding the intended functionality of the product. When asking those questions, using language that others can understand and questions that provide specific clarifications will be a practice I will utilize in the future.

As a Product Owner, you own the product vision and play a crucial role in guiding the rest of the Scrum Team toward a shared understanding of the product’s value, purpose, goals, and direction (*What Is a Product Owner? | Scrum.org*, n.d.). In essence, you’re responsible for creating value for customers. The simplest way to figure out the unique requirements of a product is to speak with the people who will be using it the most and ask them about their needs.

**Review and Retrospective: Completing User Stories**

The Scrum-Agile approach to the software development lifecycle helped user stories come to completion through various means. During the development process, the overall project is broken down into time-boxed sprints that allow the team to focus on small achievable goals in short timeframes. The user stories help define what should be possible as an end-user which is extremely important to know as a developer. This iterative process allows the team to not only deliver the next increment of the product, but it also enables them to adapt to the changing needs of a product as time passes. Consistent and continuous collaboration with team members ensures that the team understands the requirements, can provide feedback, and plan.

**Review and Retrospective: Handling Interruptions**

During this course we got a little taste of what it’s like to be interrupted as a Tester and then again as a Developer. The Scrum-Agile approach is flexible and designed to adapt to changing demands of customers and the industry as standards advance. During the first pass of completing user stories for SNHU Travel, we didn’t really have an exact idea of how the program would be navigated, so my first pass on proposed testing criteria was way off and had to be adjusted to better fit the program. To make the appropriate adjustments, clarification was sought from the Product Owner via email to obtain necessary information. In a real-life scenario this could represent a significant barrier as you are then required to communicate with other team members before you’re able to move forward, which can take time when everyone has a busy schedule. Later in the sprint another interruption presented itself as a developer. The needs of the program changed again from being a top vacation destination focused slide show to wellness vacation focused one. Ultimately, agile methodologies account for uncertainties and leave the team with enough room to respond and react appropriately.

**Review and Retrospective: Communication**

Communication and teamwork have been prominent themes in my learning about Agile-Scrum methodologies. Earlier in this retrospective I mentioned that there was a breakdown when attempting to create test cases on a first pass when assuming the Tester role.

To correct this issue, additional information had to be requested via email:

*To: Christy, Brian*

*Subject: Clarification Needed around Changes*

*Good morning,*

*I am starting to implement the changes we discussed to the SNHU Travel project to meet the new requirements. I had a couple of questions and requests:*

*Christy – Would you please keep me informed regarding any further changes as decisions are made to provide enough lead time for implementation? Also, could you please provide specifics around how information should be displayed on the slide show frames?*

*Brian – Would you please keep me informed regarding any updates to test cases or user stories so that we can use any data you have to inform technical decisions? Having this information is very helpful in figuring out the functionality of the project.*

*I would love to find time for us all to sit down together and make some decisions around how the user interface should look and function. Please let me know a time that would work for you both!*

* *Taylor Jones*

I believe this email demonstrates a polite, professional, and collaborative tone which helps maintain positive working relationships. By sending this email to both recipients and addressing each person individually within the email, they know exactly what is being asked of them while also seeing the whole conversation to maximize efficient communication. Finally, I asked direct questions about product requirements and engaged my team members by suggesting a meeting to discuss the layout which creates an opportunity for collaboration.

**Review and Retrospective: Organizational Tools**

During the SNHU Travel project the tools that were utilized were Jira and Microsoft Azure Boards. Azure Boards is a tool that the team can use to develop the project by creating a Product Backlog, User Stories, and Sprints. Jira can be used to manage individual tasks and bugs. Through using information radiators like Kanban boards to visualize progress or product backlogs to prioritize tasks, teams can better understand where they are in the sprint and what is still left to do.

**Review and Retrospective: Evaluating Agile Process**

In my opinion, utilizing the Agile process for SNHU Travel was the right move, but it was not without drawbacks. Some unpredictable requests that came up during development which created additional challenges. One of the biggest pro’s to using Agile methodologies is responsiveness to change and flexibility to adapt, but with SNHU Travel we saw a lot of expansion of the scope of the project. When you consider the lesson this project teaches, I see two major cons: without a way to control the scope of a project you may find your customers asking for more or different features, and in real world scenarios these types of changes could possibly represent months of additional work that wasn’t originally in the scope of the project. On the other hand, utilizing an iterative approach like a sprint allows you the greatest chance at giving customers exactly what they want because you can quickly respond to their feedback to ensure proper functionality. Had a waterfall approach been utilized for SNHU Travel, I think the customer would have ultimately been very disappointed with the outcome of their software. The change to wellness getaways would have been very difficult to implement if a preplanned development approach had already been set in motion, so Agile-Scrum ended up being a clear winner in my mind.

References

Scrum.org. (2020). *What is a Product Owner?* Scrum.org.

https://www.scrum.org/resources/what-is-a-product-owner