Sprint Review and Retrospective- Tom Czubat

During this Sprint, our team at Chada Tech has worked very diligently to accomplish our goals to meet the requirements of our customer, SNHU Travel. As the Scrum Master, I will discuss how our Sprint went and what we could do better be more efficient and productive. The Scrum Master’s job is to establish the agile-scrum principles throughout our team. The Scrum Master also needs to help with people from outside of the team that want to communicate with the team. A Scrum Master also runs the Scrum Events such as the Daily Scrum. During these daily meetings, every team member is to attend and is asked three questions which are “What did you do yesterday?”, “What will you do today?” and “What is impeding your progress?”. These meetings were helpful when working on the SNHU Travel project because it allowed the whole team to stay on the same page and help each other if someone was having trouble. As the Scrum Master, I was also responsible for facilitating the Sprint Planning meetings. This meeting really helped me understand what the team needed help with and how I can remove any impediments that were standing in their way and also tried to provide good coaching to get the most out of our tea. A Sprint is a time-box of 2-4 weeks within a project where at the end, something is done, usable and possibly a project increment is completed. Sprints consists of five parts, Sprint Planning, Daily Standup Meetings, Development, Sprint Review and the Sprint Retrospective. A Sprint Goal is what is to be completed during this time frame. During the Sprint Planning meeting a flexible plan is created to meet this goal. The plan is created by the whole team and facilitated by the Scrum Master. The Scrum Master’s job is to make sure the team understands its goals and teach the team to keep the goal of the Sprint within the time frame. The developers take the User Stories that were created by the Product Owner and decide how many they can complete in the next upcoming Sprint. Once the Sprint is completed a Sprint review is held. During this time, the team collaborates on what was done during the Sprint, what has not been done, what problems there were, how they were solved, and what to do next. The Sprint Retrospective is where the team comes together to look within and see how it can improve during the next sprint. The Scrum Master is responsible for making sure the meeting is positive and productive. Agile is about improving and adapting to changing conditions. During the SNHU Travel Project, it was helpful to create a Team Charter. The Charter is a document that lays the foundation for the team throughout all of the phases of the project. The Charter is built by the team and has agreed upon guidelines for team dynamics, behavior and communication. It is a helpful tool plan the vision of this project and have the entire team give their input.

The Product Owner and the Scrum Master work closely together so it is important that they have good communication. The Product Owner is the face of the agile team and their role is to deal with the stakeholders and clients. The Product Owner is responsible for creating User Stories and creating a prioritized Product Backlog. The Product Backlog is an ordered list of the new features, changes to existing features, bug fixes, infrastructure changes or other activities that a team may deliver in order to achieve a specific outcome. Using User Stories within the Product Backlog is a very useful tool in agile because it allows teams to break large projects into smaller and more manageable pieces that can be prioritized based on the need of the project. This was done by meeting with the SNHU Travel client and finding out what features they wanted in the application. After the User Stories are created and the Product Backlog is prioritized, it is shown to the development team and their questions are answered about any requirements that they are not sure about. There was open communication about the User Stories and Product Backlog which helped everyone in the team to speak their thoughts and agree on what would be possible during this Sprint. This collaborative focus of scrum-agile helped build our teamwork and communication within our team. The Product Owner also makes sure the Product Backlog is in a visible area so that everyone can see it and know what is going on.

The Development Team is the next important role of our team. Their job is to develop a releasable increment of a product at the end of each sprint. The Development Team is self-organizing, meaning that they are empowered to organize and manage their own work. This methodology allows our developers to take responsibility for their work and decide themselves how each increment should be built. The developers were key in the SNHU Travel project because they were the ones developing the code for the Top 5 Travel Destinations. Agile-Scrum served our development team well because they were ready to adapt when needed. This happened when the customer told our Product Owner through email that they wanted to change the requirements for the application and instead have it display the Top 5 Wellness/Detox destinations. It was important that our Product Owner had good communication with the client so that they could get detailed requirements so they could revise the User Stories and then communicate these changes to our developers and testers. Our developers benefitted greatly from our agile approach. During our daily 15-minute Stand-Ups, the team was able to have good face-to-face communication where they could collaborate and lean on each other for support when they were stuck. Since our Sprints usually lasted between 2-4 weeks, our developers were able create the application piece by piece and have a working prototype at the end of each Sprint. This allowed our team to constantly adapt and continue to improve when they reflected on how the Sprint went and what could be done better.

The software testers also served an important role during our Sprint. The tester’s job is to take the User Stories from the Product Owner and create test cases that decide whether the User Story meets the requirements of being done. Testing is more emphasize in agile-scrum than in a traditional waterfall model where testing is only done at the end of the development process. Testing in agile is done concurrently with development and this provides many benefits in the end. It is important to do testing concurrently because it will give immediate feedback at a constant rate to the team. This is where the concept of “failing fast” comes into play because failure is encouraged and expected with the agile methodology so the faster that there is failure, the sooner the team realizes that what they are doing is wrong and adjustments can be made. The test cases for the development team gave them the understanding of what the product needs to provide in order to be accepted and pass the test cases. Using this methodology can save your team time in the end because small errors can be fixed quickly before they turn into bigger issues. This will help reduce the amount of technical debt.

In conclusion, I believe that agile was the correct approach for the SNHU Travel Project. Since we did not have all of the requirements at the beginning, we did less planning because we knew that we would be able to get more requirements later in the development process. If we used waterfall, it would be more difficult to plan the whole project and we would take longer to begin development. The iterative process of agile allowed us to be adaptive and work in small increments of 2-4 weeks that really helped us when the customer had changed requirements. This is why our focus on good communication and ability to adapt to change helped us deliver the SNHU Travel Project.