CS 250 Final Project

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During my time learning about Agile and the various roles involved in this new way of working, I have experienced each role and learned quite a bit about each one of them and what is expected from them. These roles are Scrum Master, Product Owner, Tester, and Developer. Each role works together but they all have different responsibilities from each other. The Scrum Master is the one in charge of making sure the team has as easy as a development as possible. They also make sure that all team members are aware of their duties and expectations in the sprint plannings that occur before each sprint. In the development of the SNHU Travel project, the Scrum Master contributed to the success by being the one to keep the team informed on what needed to be done. Also being in charge of the daily scrums, the Scrum Master was the one to run the meetings to make sure things were being accomplished the previous day and work was being planned for the future. I think the Scrum Master is one of the most important roles in the team because they can be in charge of fun and engaging events that the team can participate in to become fully comfortable with the team. Being able to trust the team around you will help the quality of product and mood of the team.

The Product Owner role is the one that most closely interacts with customers, users, and stakeholders. They are the ones that get to hear all of the input on what exactly the customer wants from the team. They also deal with the user stories, which are incredibly important, as they give the team information about exactly what needs to be worked on, what is most important in the product, and how large each task is. These user stories use the format of “As a <type of user> I want to <perform some task> so that I can <achieve some goal>.” This format gives an easy-to-follow blueprint showing exactly what the user wants and why they want it. In the development of the SNHU Travel project, user stories were very important. They helped with introducing features that were wanted and gave what would be considered acceptable when completing those features. The very descriptive acceptance criteria of needing to have destination name, description, and picture told me exactly what they were looking for and make it much less of a guessing game as to what was being looked for.

The developer, to me, is the one that does the “dirty work”. Not that it is any more or less important than any of the other roles, but I would say without the developers, the project goes nowhere and probably cannot even begin. The developer is one to first decide how to implement a certain feature and how they want the UI to look. Of course, this can be changed at a later date if needed but they are the ones to get it started and in a working condition. In the development of the SNHU Travel project, the developer was responsible for putting everything into place and making sure it all worked at a base level. This means all of the main functions worked as intended and there were not any known issues at the time it was given to the next role, the tester, to check for any situations that the software was not functioning properly.

The tester is the one to go into more fringe cases to make sure the project is functioning under all circumstances. If the tester finds any issues, sometimes they may be able to fix it themselves and if not, they can report the issue back to the developer to get it fixed as soon as possible. The tester works with the user stories as well to make sure the acceptance criteria has been met. These stories give an understanding of what needs to be done in order for it to be completed successfully and an idea of the features that needed to be added and what would be displayed by specific added features. The tester can also create test cases in order to give very specific and exact step by step instructions on how to get to an expected end result. This can help anyone trying to recreate a certain error or getting to a specific feature within the program. In the development of the SNHU Travel project, the tester was important for knowing how to find any issues within the code. There was a point where the search button was displaying improperly after clicking a few options, and the tester was able to follow through the steps to recreate the error. This helped the developer later find the issue in the code to make sure that issue was no longer occurring.

The user stories are a crucial part of having a product that users will appreciate and enjoy. Having a Scrum-agile approach during the software development lifecycle with these user stories helped to create a better product. The user stories helped achieve very specific features within the product. The first feature added was the end user wanted to be able to click a link to view the top five destinations list so they could see the most popular locations for travel to be educated on the best places to go. For this specific example, being able to show what the user wanted and then work on that was important. This made it so the main feature the user wanted was prioritized and could even easily be changed later if needed, which it eventually would be needed.

After a considerable amount of work was done on the project, it was decided that the project should change its direction. The project had to be modified a little bit, but since an agile approach was being used, it did not slow down the flow of work too much. The change was based on wanting to focus more on detox and wellness travel, which was expected to be popular soon. The base work that had been done was just slightly reworked in order to prioritize detox and wellness vacation over the previous “most popular” vacations.

I think I am able to communicate effectively within a team. I posted within one of my team discussions, “People typically need to feel fully comfortable in order to voice their true opinions, so it is important to make team members as comfortable as possible as quick as possible. We just have to remind them that we succeed and fail as a team, so we want to know any and all ideas to improve the product.” I think this statement of mine should encourage members of the team to want to collaborate together and succeed.

I think the most important scrum event is the sprint planning. It is vital to plan everything out and set out to achieve certain goals. Taking a large project and splitting it up into smaller sprints is important for the team to succeed and not get initially overwhelmed with the large amount of work. Being able to pace the team and give them realistic goals boosts the confidence of everyone and gives the hope in the products success. Using certain software like Jira can also really help the team to have a place to gather all of the information in one online spot. These apps show things that need worked on and things that are already done, as well as easy access to other team members that may not be easily reachable in a remote type of role.

I believe using the Scrum-agile approach for the SNHU Travel project was a success. The main pros are that a big project can be split up into smaller sprints, progress is constantly achieved and reported in daily standups, and there is closer interaction with the customer. Some of the cons are that integrating a scrum-agile approach can be difficult for some teams, especially teams that do not want to fully commit to it, and it does not use traditional roles which may be hard for some people to adjust to. Using a scrum-agile approach was definitely the best for the SNHU Travel project. I mostly believe this because the development changed course and work had to be switched up to achieve a different end result than initially planned for. In a waterfall approach, the product would have been completed without ever changing course and the customer would not have been as happy as they were with being able to change midway through the development.