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Sprint Review and Retrospective

The SNHU Travel project would not have been so efficiently completed without the entire Scrum Team. Each member of the team played a specific, vital role in the project, leading to its completion.

First, there was the Scrum Master. The Scrum Master is almost like the leader of the team, but with a more laissez-faire approach. The Scrum Master facilitates and sets up ground rules for the Scrum Meetings, coaches members of the Scrum Team, helps an organization adopt a more agile approach, removes impediments for team members, and helps team members deal with the product backlog. In this project, the Scrum Master created the Agile Team Charter which laid out key aspects of the project, like the team’s mission statement, success criteria, and guidelines for carrying out Scrum meetings and various communication. The Scrum Master also presided over some Scrum Meetings.

The Product Owner is responsible for product backlog management. They set goals for the product and create items for the product backlog. The product backlog represents the desires of the stakeholders. It is a clear list of tasks for the Scrum Team to work on. The Product Owner ultimately is responsible for delivering a great product to the stakeholders, and the Product owner is the stakeholder’s representative to the Scrum Team. In this project, the Product Owner communicated with the stakeholders and used their requests and criticisms to create the product backlog. This took the form of a series of user stories, or tasks for the development team to work on to help deliver the desired product to the stakeholders. In this case, the stakeholders wanted an interactive list of travel locations among other things. The product backlog clearly defined all tasks that needed to be completed to satisfy their needs.

The Tester is responsible for creating a list of test cases to help satisfy the user stories on the product backlog. These test cases represent the customer’s perspective of using the product. Each test case defines a clear input and desired output. A test case explains how the product should work and how to test that it is working in that desired fashion. In this project, the tester created a list of test cases by examining individual user stories and devising ways to test that these features are working as intended.

The Developer is arguably one of the most important parts of the Scrum Team. Developers divide tasks among themselves and help build each other’s knowledge in the Scrum Meetings. Developers also handle the user stories of the product backlog and help with the Tester’s test cases. They also help create the Sprint Backlog and participate in Sprint Reviews. In this project, the Developer fulfilled the requirements of the user stories from the product backlog and made the stakeholders’ desired features a reality. The Developer accomplished this by making changes to the codebase.

The Scrum Team helped SNHU Travel accomplish their goals by following the Scrum-Agile methodology. First, the Product Owner met with the stakeholders. They explained that they wanted the software to show the user a list of the top 5 travel destinations. The Product Owner created user stories to represent the stakeholders’ desires. Then, the Tester created a list of test cases, based on these user stories, which detailed specific inputs and desired outputs from the software. The Developer then used these user stories and test cases to make changes to the software that satisfied the stakeholders’ desires for the product. In this case, the Developer made changes to the source code to accommodate the stakeholders’ desire to have the software show its users a list of the top 5 travel destinations. A tool was created to show the user a list of the top 5 travel destinations.

One of the main strengths of the Scrum-Agile methodology is its ability to embrace change and quickly pivot to better serve the needs of the stakeholders. In a meeting with SNHU Travel’s management, they informed the Product Owner that they wanted to shift their focus to detox/wellness vacation packages. The Product Owner then called for a meeting with the rest of the Scrum Team in which they explained these changes to the plan. The Product Owner made changes to the user stories to reflect these changes in planning. Thanks to the open and communicative nature of the Scrum-Agile methodology. The Scrum Team was able to quickly adjust to these changes. The Tester updated their test cases to reflect the change in direction, and the Developer immediately began modifying the source code to satisfy the requirements of the user stories and test cases. By the end of the Sprint, the SNHU Travel website now showed users an interactive slideshow of the top 5 detox/wellness travel destinations.

As the Scrum Master, I ensured that our team had frequent meetings, as communication is the most important component of an effective Scrum Team. We held daily Scrum Meetings as well as meetings with the client. In the beginning, we met with the client representative, Amanda. She told us that SNHU Travel has been wanting to get into “trendy, niche vacation packages.” Upon hearing this, I decided to assemble a Scrum Team and the Product Owner got to work on the product backlog. I started organizing the Sprint Planning meeting as well as daily Scrum meetings, Sprint Review and Retrospective, and Backlog Refinement. These meetings helped keep everyone in the loop about everything that was happening with our project. Later, when SNHU Travel told the Product Owner they wanted to shift their focus to detox/wellness vacation packages, we held a meeting with the Product Owner and the whole Scrum Team. We immediately discussed the desired changes with them and made plans for how to complete these changes within the Sprint. It was the openness and immediacy of communication in this example that allowed the entire team to quickly pivot their focus. A turnaround like this might not have been possible using a non-agile approach.

The most important tool for our team’s success was the daily Scrum meeting. This project had some twists and turns, as all projects do, but the use of the Scrum-Agile methodology and the daily Scrum meeting enabled our Scrum Team to gracefully pivot with each change of plans. Thanks to the daily Scrum meeting, the team becomes tight-knit, and each team member develops an intimate understanding of the project and everyone’s role in it. Any time anyone has a question or impediment, the rest of the team is always there to help. Also, any time plans change, everyone immediately knows about it and starts working on solutions. This ability to constantly, quickly adjust to changing plans is what agility is all about.

The Scrum-Agile approach was absolutely essential in the success of this project. The Scrum Team’s ability to openly and frequently communicate with one another made it possible for them to quickly change direction and accomplish many goals in each Sprint. The lack of specialization in a Scrum-Agile team made it possible for the team to accomplish more, because everyone could do meaningful work at the same time. The team did not have to wait for one person to finish a user story before they could continue. One potential con of the Agile approach would be a lack of a definitive plan. It must be this way so the team can rapidly adjust to changes. However, this can lead to increased time spent trying to figure out how to proceed. With the Waterfall approach, the entire plan is laid out from the beginning, but with Agile, it is much more of a make-it-up-as-you-go-along style approach. Thankfully though, this challenge can be overcome through daily Scrum meetings, allowing the team to constantly plan as they go.