A Scrum-Agile team approach is a unique way to efficiently work on a project. At the highest level of the Scrum team, we have the Product Owner. His job is to sell the product to customers and accurately sell the team’s ability to deliver. The Product Owner is in charge of establishing what the project will be and how it should be built through a technique know as user stories. These User stories are then given to the Scrum Master who leads the development team. Here the Scrum Master leads a meeting with all the developers to analyze the user stories and determine the level of importance and the time that would be required to develop each aspect of the project. From here the developers can decide on which task they undertake taking special care to work with one another to complete their goals as a team. AS the project is developed Testers, who are part of the scrum team, create tests and consistently put the project through tests looking for bugs and other errors. This ensures that the project is working as intended.

One tool that was briefly mentioned was the user stories. These stories are necessary for the software development life cycle by explaining what a potential desired outcome would be for a certain individual. User stories are generally created by the Product Owner with input form the customer, future end users, or the stakeholders. These user stories are then passed on to the Scrum Master and in turn given to the development team. The purpose of the user stories is to convey to the developers what exactly they want. For example, if a feature for a top five list is desired for a particular website, developers could interpret a “top five list” as top five most visited places, top five highest reviewed places, or any other interpretation. To get exactly what the customer wants the Product owner submits the user story using a template. “As a (person that is targeted), I want (Specified feature).” For example, to get a top five list of places tailored to the customer, the product owner would say: “As a customer, I want to be able to customize a search to find the top five places based on my preferences.” The developers would then know they need to create a search function with options to specify how travel locations are pulled form the server.

An asset of agile development is the ability to adapt and change with minimal time delays. Instead of scrapping many already made features and starting fresh, developers can see what they have and decide what needs to be altered, what can stay, and what needs to be eliminated. In the SNHU travel agency example, they had the development team create a travel website to show off different travel locations and forms of travel. The original system was tailored to generic vacations with no specific purpose other than to find a location to travel to and what activities they provided. Part way through the SNHU travel team decided they would rather focus on a wholistic retreat or a detox trip which is meant as a therapeutic type of travel. When this change in direction was given to the team, they had to evaluate what features needed to change and what could be kept. For this example, the change was of a simpler nature and didn’t require much of an overhaul, but rather a change in information. This allowed the team to keep the schedule and make the project exactly how the customers wanted.

Communication is very efficient in an agile team. Firstly, each morning all of the developers and testers get the chance to communicate what they accomplished, what they will accomplish, and what hinders their progress in the daily scrum. The Product Owner isn’t required in this meeting, however he is not banned from it. Product Owners also have the chance to meet with scrum masters in a way that suites his needs. If he is in charge of small number of teams, he could meet with each scrum master as frequently as needed. If the product owner oversees many scrum teams, he may decide to make a longer meeting either biweekly or monthly depending on the teams’ needs. All these meeting happen consistently and keep each member well informed. Members may also communicate via email in addition to the meetings. For the SNHU travel we saw scrum meetings as well as emailing product owners and testers.

With the many working parts of an agile method, the need for organizational tools is immeasurable. In class we learned about different software that can be used to keep all the work organized while allowing multiple people to work on a project simultaneously. These programs also allow users to send communication, organize team calendars, and utilize other features keeping all information in the same location. Other tools are not used on the computes, but are strategies used by the team to organize size and time restraints of certain features for the project.

While no plan is truly perfect, the effectiveness of the agile method is what makes it so heavily used. The SNHU travel team wanted to create a website to allow customers to search for potential vacation destinations, customize their preferences, and book reservations. They wanted the project done in a timely fashion, they wanted to be able to make certain changes during the development of the project, and they wanted consistent updates and progress of the project. For all of these reasons the agile methodology was the best option. The Scrum team was able to meet all the needs and produce a project that was satisfactory to the customer. Although the agile method was the best option for their requirements, it is not to say that the waterfall method wouldn’t work for the SNHU travel team had they had different priorities. Had the team from SNHU travel wanted more control over what was being developed, if it were more important for them to plan every facet of the project, and if they wanted everything to be examined through a fine comb then the best option for them would have been to use the waterfall method, provided that they understood the potential time delays of the project.