The Scrum-Agile Team was made up of a specific set of roles. First was the Product Owner, who acted as the voice of the customer and managed the backlog as the customer needs changed over the course of the project. The Product Owner was key for accommodating a request that the customer had made partway through the development process. Next, the developers were the ones to tackle the user stories in the backlog based on the progress of the project. By taking on individual user stories based on priority and the backlog, they were able to quickly build small pieces of the project at a time until it was completed. Another important role was the tester, who created and executed tests for each user story to ensure they were completed without any bugs. The tester also asked insightful questions when the customer asked the product owner for additional information about wellness/detox vacations to better distill the request into user stories for the backlog and design tests for them too. Finally, there was me, the Scrum Master. As the Scrum Master, I facilitated daily standups, held sprint planning meetings, and utilized a burn-up chart to track the team’s overall progress on the project as well as adjustments in scope. I also helped to make sure that the team adhered to the principles and practices put forth by the Scrum-Agile framework to quickly execute.

The Scrum-Agile approach to the software development life cycle was instrumental in helping user stories come to completion. It provided an iterative and flexible framework for development. By utilizing sprints and breaking down the project into modular user stories, developers and testers were able to work on specific elements of the project that came together as a whole.

At one point, the product owner communicated to the rest of the team that SNHU Travel had discovered through an industry report that detox/wellness vacations were an emerging sector of the travel industry. As a result, the team had to adapt and pivot in order to accommodate this change. After the initial request, the tester was able to ask clarifying questions to enable the product owner to better interpret it and define clear user stories for the developers. After some discussion amongst the team, the product owner defined the user stories associated with this new direction and adjusted the backlog to prioritize it while also keeping in mind the other work that needed to be done as well.

In module 4, as a tester, I wrote an email regarding new requirements set forth by the product owner based on the customer’s new requests. For each of the three new user stories, I wrote three clarifying questions so that I could develop appropriate tests to accommodate for the change in direction. Additionally, the questions allowed the product owner to communicate with the customer to distill the original requests down to specific user stories to be added to the backlog. It is important to note that the questions are not a cure-all for potential issues, but merely a jumping-off point to start the discussion between the tester and product owner to more clearly define the user stories and the necessary tests.

The Kanban board was a critical organization tool for stand-up meetings. It allowed all team members to keep track of user stories and their progress, as well as which team members had a user story to work on, whether it was starting development on a new user story or testing one recently completed by a developer. At stand-up meetings, the Kanban board is an easily readable source of truth for the whole team, and updatable as each member goes over what they did yesterday, and what they plan on accomplishing today. Another high-level organizational tool was the burn-up chart. It allowed me and the product owner to clearly communicate the overall project progress to the customer, while also accounting for the increase in scope partway through development.

The Scrum-Agile approach had a lot of leverageable advantages with some drawbacks during the SNHU Travel project. One advantage was being able to adapt to the customer’s request for us to build out a page on the site for wellness/detox vacations. Instead of having to stay on a railroad track on the waterfall methodology and adding the new request at the end, the team was able to quickly define new user stories and deprioritize other user stories in the backlog to push the new features as quickly as possible. One disadvantage of Scrum-Agile is that it requires much more granular planning. Rather than being able to lay out a roadmap for production towards the completed product, the product owner is constantly developing new user stories for the next stages of development.

The Scrum-Agile approach was definitively the best approach for the SNHU Travel development project. After the customer requested the wellness/detox vacations to be featured on the website, the product owner was able to synthesize the request into user stories for the scrum master to add to the backlog and allow developers and testers to begin work on them immediately. Had we utilized the waterfall methodology, the entire project would have to be completed before adding the new features, and the SNHU Travel site would have missed the mark on the emerging category.