Each role of the scrum team provides valuable input to the overall success of the project, and each member of the team is an invaluable asset. The Scrum master provides planning, runs daily meetings and reviews the sprint, these vital tasks ensure the overall team stays focused on the greater task and delivering value. The product owner’s role prioritizes the user stories to help align the project for the overall business objectives and also prioritizes the backlog to make sure the most important parts of the project get completed so the overall project meets the business goal. The development team collaborates among themselves to complete the task by breaking down the user stories to create individual and team tasking. Also, the dev team does task estimation which is associated with the work to be completed so there is full alignment and transparency among all parts of the team for traceability and tracking project progress.

The Agile approach to the software development lifecycle enables user stories to be completed in an iterative fashion. This agile approach begins with breaking down the user stories into completable tasks and estimated time frames for those tasks. For example, in the beginning stages of the project there was no theme for the travel project and as the project grew and new businesses objectives were generated, and a theme was asked of the dev team. With short dev cycles and constant feedback, prioritization, and transparency of the backlog and completed work the product owner can easily rearrange priorities and give directions of what to complete in the current cycle and what can wait to meet the business objectives.

This agile approach to user stories works alongside handling interruptions and direction changes. As we know, to meet business objectives there was a shift in the travel project to be more health conscious. To meet this business objective and deliver working software within the cycle timeframe the agile method made this task just another day of work. The agile work environment gave the ability to prioritize the tasks so the business objective could be met without sacrificing the timeline. With the short iterative cycles that make up the agile process this shift in direction was just a function of reorganizing the work. This is why agile is a preferred method, with transparency and continuous communication the overall team can make quick pivots without delaying the target delivery date.

Another pilar in the agile framework is communication and is essential for the overall travel project team’s success. Regular meetings and reviews create opportunities for discussion where the team can give feedback and share blockers this communication gives team alignment and shows where gaps exist which might have been overlooked within the open line of communication. As just stated, communication shows progress and blockers, and the agile team uses techniques such as information radiators and kanban boards to visualize this. By bringing progress and blockers to something physical such a whiteboard this makes the communications a reference and easy for the team to understand. Also, tools such as JIRA give a way to make team members accountable for specific actions as in JIRA tasks can be assigned and tracked which the team can access and track updates virtually.

There are many organizational tools the team used to maintain the agile process and stay on a productive path. For example, the agile team used JIRA for task assignment and management of the user stories. Also, the kanban board was useful in identifying potential blockers and tracking completed tasks making daily standups interactive by using the kanban board to define daily tasking. Also, while project planning estimation processes were used and based on the estimation needed different estimation practices can be utilized. One example of estimation for a high-level estimation is t-shirt sizing. This gives a high-level estimate without the nitty gritty details which in some cases may not be the most effective way to estimate if a fine estimation is needed.

The agile approach to the travel project was very successful. This success is based on many factors, such as the flexibility of the agile structure. When project requirements shifted during the middle of the project it was absorbed easily due to the ability to shift priorities quickly due to the continuous communication. Also, due to the agile process being iterative regular feedback make sure the project aligns almost exactly with the expectation. The agile process does not come without some challenges; without regular communication the process does not work as intended so with bad management or a team not fully synced the process may not work well. Also, with short cycles comes more responsibility and coordination and if any part of the system slips this can throw off the schedule which pushes the project back or critical items may be missed in each iteration losing the alignment with the expected delivery causing teams to fail. If the challenges of agile can be mitigated properly and the team communicates well and can hit the targets the agile approach is the best fit for the travel project and gives the best opportunity for success and delivering the business goal.