There are three roles on a Scrum team: the Product Owner, the Scrum Master, and the Development Team. The Product Owner is responsible for creating, organizing, and prioritizing the Product Backlog to give direction to the team. The Scrum Master helps to organize the various Scrum meetings and helps the Product Owner work on the Product Backlog. In a mature team the Scrum Master is required less and less as the team learns to self-organize more effectively. The Development Team is responsible for communicating with the customer for clarification on user stories, and implementing, testing, and releasing the product according to the Product Backlog. Without the Product Owner the team has no clear vision for the product. Without the Scrum Master an immature team isn’t coordinated enough to work effectively.

In our SNHU Travel project, the scrum master developed the team charter and coordinated the daily scrum meeting while the project owner developed the product backlog based on user stories gathered from the focus group. Within the development team, the tester wrote test cases taking into account the user stories’ definition of done while the developer implemented them. When the product owner updated the requirements based on new priorities, the development team revised the project as needed.

A Scrum-Agile approach allows the customer to express their needs directly to the team, which are written down as user stories in the project backlog. The product owner then prioritizes them in order of importance and urgency and breaks the larger stories down, refining them into smaller parts until the smallest stories can be implemented into the project by the development team. Over many sprints this allows even the largest user stories to be implemented into the project piece by piece. In the SNHU Travel project we gathered the initial requirements and later a few changes from the customer and made the necessary updates to the product backlog.

Normally the sprint backlog doesn’t change during a sprint until the tasks associated with it are marked as done except in high priority emergencies. The product owner can add new items to the top of the product backlog and deprioritize existing items, so the focus changes for the next sprint. In the SNHU Travel project when the customer told us about the change in focus to the new detox/wellness travel destinations, we were able to quickly reprioritize the product backlog to accommodate the new requirements. In a more traditionally managed project this would be a lot harder as the design had already been established.

Communication is done through the scrum ceremonies like the sprint planning meeting, daily standup, and the sprint retrospective. The development team communicates with the customer during the sprint to refine user stories. Every week we would share discussions and respond to them.

Organizational tools like scrum boards and kanban boards, or digital versions like VersionOne, Jira, and Azure Boards, are used so that everyone on the team can see and update the current status of the project.

The advantages of using the Scrum-Agile approach for the SNHU Travel project are the fast reaction times to changes due to the short sprint lengths and the way planning can be done iteratively as new information is gathered. The disadvantages are that it’s very fast paced and there’s a lot of uncertainty in the beginning.

Based on these considerations, the Scrum-Agile was the best approach for the SNHU Travel project because if a waterfall approach was used then the direction of the project couldn’t be changed to the wellness/detox direction as easily.