There are four main roles in a Scrum team: Scrum Master, Product Owner, Developer, and Tester. The Scrum Master is the person taking the leadership of the whole team and is responsible for delegating work to specific individuals. At the meantime, a Scrum Master is also responsible for maintaining a smooth line of conversation with the Product Owner to understand what the client wants since changes may happen from time to time. The Product Owner is mainly responsible for taking the responsibility of the whole project from beginning to end. Specifically, a Product Owner needs to open up the communication window with the clients to understand their needs. Whenever something unexpected happens during the development phase, the Product Owner needs to immediately reach out to the client and discuss about an alternative plan. The Developer is the main person handling development work. Such person usually has expertise in the technicality needed for the project and can handle a variety of issues. If any unintended issues arise, then the Developer is responsible for contacting the Scrum Master and Product Owner so that an immediate remediation could be sought for. The Tester is the person verifying the functionality of the final product. Such individual usually has expertise in various testing procedures (e.g. unit testing). If any bugs are detected during the testing phase, the Tester is responsible for communicating with the Developer to seek for a patch to fix the bug. In the SNHU travel project, the Scrum Master was taking care of responsibility delegation and initial communication with the client to obtain a preliminary picture of the project. The Product Owner then took over the communication responsibility with the client and updated the whole team on the changes of the project—adding section for detox/wellness vacations in the previous infrastructure. The Developer was delegated for the app development effort, and specifically she was the person responsible for asking questions about project changes and making changes to meet with client’s requirements. The Tester was communicating with the Developer to offer advice and insights on potential bug fixes.

In order to accomplish a successful completion for any user stories, an integrated team effort would be critical. In the SNHU travel project, the Scrum Master initially understood the client’s requirements for the software and explained the key points to the whole team. He then delegated responsibilities based on everyone’s strengths to ensure the development process is smooth and stable. The Product Owner took the responsibility to keep in touch with the client, and she was able to obtain the most updated requirement information quickly from the client. While being informed about the direction changes, the developer made the right choice of immediately asking relevant questions to expedite the modifying process instead of complaining about the changes. The tester was very collaborative as well to accept the changes and helped the developer to come up with a new development plan.

When it comes to sudden interruptions and direction changes in a project, appropriate delegation of responsibility is the main task for a Scrum Master, and all Scrum members should be provided a clear picture of what they are responsible for. I personally have prior experience of serving as the Scrum Master for a team of four. Our team task was to work together to develop a software as well as handling different incidents at the meantime. I delegated the person who was best at communicating to become the Product Owner in order for the team to have a clear picture of what the client wanted and for the client to be aware of anything going on with our software development process. The other two people were both acting as developers and testers since they were practicing pair programming to eliminate potential knowledge gaps and syntax errors. While we were proceeding smoothly with our software, we suddenly encountered a huge incident which caused a 30-minute downtime of our application. We were able to quickly switch our roles from Scrum Master to Incident Commander, Product Owner to Communications Lead, and Developer and Tester to Operations Lead. This smooth transition helped us to reduce the overall toil as well as potential data loss during the application downtime. Therefore, the Scrum-agile approach helped our team to maintain a clear line of command and smooth transition of roles, and augment our own strengths. When directions changed, Product Owner was able to grasp the gist of the changes quickly and deliver the team with the main idea of changes. The developer and tester who were technically savvy could then take care of modifying the source code to satisfy client’s expectations.

In the Scrum team, a smooth communication flow needs to be always preserved, and everyone should be encouraged to speak up when questions come up. Hence, during my daily Scrum standup, my communication strategy would be to express my opinions first, ask for feedbacks and suggestions, and then offer the whole team several options for the next step. This strategy not only helps the introverts to relieve their burden of talking too much but also helps the extraverts to concentrate their focus on several viable options. I would also open up the floor and ask for any other thoughts if my options are not preferred. Overall, an initial speech from my end would give the rest of the team encouragement to speak up, and offering them options would relieve team’s burden and concentrate everyone’s thoughts.

One tool I have used to accomplish my daily Scrum standup event is Trello. Trello is a dashboard that offers several pre-made columns used to help the team align expectations. Some example columns are On-going, Current Sprint, Today’s tasks, Finished tasks, and Questions. The daily Scrum standup should be a very laid-back meeting for all team members and should encourage everyone with questions or concerns to speak up. However, if there are too many members, ideas can get lost and the conversation can gradually lose focus. Therefore, Trello is a very meaningful and useful tool to keep track of what daily tasks are, and it is also helpful when performing a Sprint Retrospective.

The Scrum-agile approach has shown its effectiveness for the SNHU Travel Project. The team overall has been working collaborative and efficiently to maintaining a smooth communication line so that the final product that satisfies client’s expectations could be delivered on time. The main advantage of the Scrum-agile approach is it maintains transparency amongst all team members: if anyone has any issues, the daily Scrum event would encourage them to express their concerns so that the whole team can work together. Another advantage is it has a clear line of commands: Scrum Master is responsible for initial communication and delegation, Product Owner is responsible for client communication, and developer and tester are responsible for development effort. The biggest drawback of this approach is that it assumes everyone can handle their delegated responsibilities perfectly well. Similar to the waterfall strategy, if only one developer is assigned who is not keeping up with his work, then the whole team would be left in limbo. For the SNHU Travel Project, the Scrum-agile approach would be the best approach because it encourages team work to happen throughout the entire Scrum. Since the project was not big and there were only four team members, everyone could help each other out despite their own responsibilities.