

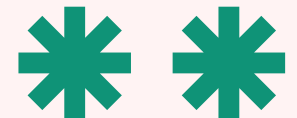


Revitalizing Your

NEW MEMBER ACCEPTANCE PRACTICES

**Rahul Mannapperuma
& Emily Sears**

NEILL-WYCIK CO-OP, TORONTO



A BIT ABOUT US

Neill-Wycik



- Neill-Wycik is an ~740 bed, 23 floor high-rise in downtown Toronto, that opened its doors in 1970.
- We primarily cater to students attending any post-secondary institution in Toronto.
- During the summer months (May-August), part of our building transitions into a hotel, which is one of the reasons we offer 8 month occupancy agreements.
- We currently accept domestic, international and exchange students.



Continued...



A BIT ABOUT US

Continued

- We have approx. 35 staff throughout the school year, with more seasonal staff added during the hotel months.
- As an aging co-op, we face many issues with building maintenance and general upkeep
- **Rahul : Board Director, Chair of Membership Development Committee**
- **Emily : Community Development Manager**





OUR

AGENDA



The Problem

We'll break down how we recognized the problem Neill-Wycik was facing, and briefly explain our old membership application process.



The Solution

Let's touch on the steps we took to move forward, coordination with staff, and tailoring the solution to work best for us.



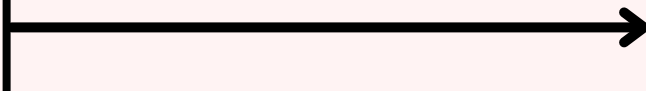
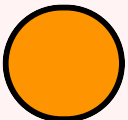
Implementation

Planning is one thing, but what did our actual implementation look like? What sort of challenges did we face?



Lessons Learned

Let's touch on things that worked well, and things that didn't. More importantly, let's talk about how some of our ideas can evolve and be implemented in your co-ops.





The

PROBLEM

First-Come First-Serve Model

NW has operated on a first come, first serve basis since opening. While this did work historically, marketing ourselves online meant we had 600+ students vying for the same 100 rooms (within hours of opening applications).

Ineffective Applicant Screening

The lack of meaningful member education and screening in the application process resulted in acceptance of members who were disengaged and misaligned with the co-ops mission & vision.



Previous

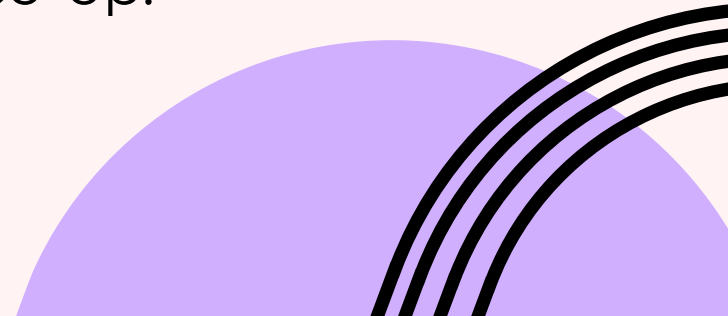
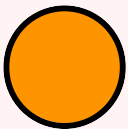


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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

As of 2023, Neill Wycik's 'New Membership Process' proved to be **outdated, inefficient** and **misaligned** with the co-op's mission and vision.

The existing process had been built around physical paper applications and even with efforts to partially update it, the process was resulting in noticeable inefficiencies with long-term effects for the co-op.



Previous

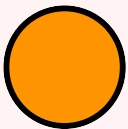


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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

Some defining challenges of the previous membership process were:

- Lack of New Member Education
- Low Barrier to Apply
- Declining quality of New Members due to
 - First come, first serve acceptance model
 - Ineffective applicant screening
 - Lack of operational alignment with new member acceptance process



Understanding

OUR DEMOGRAPHIC



When processing our members through paper applications, we had not been digitizing records.

This means we had no idea how many members were current students vs recent grads, how many were domestic vs. international, how many were coming to us from each neighbouring school, etc.



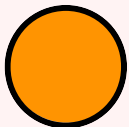
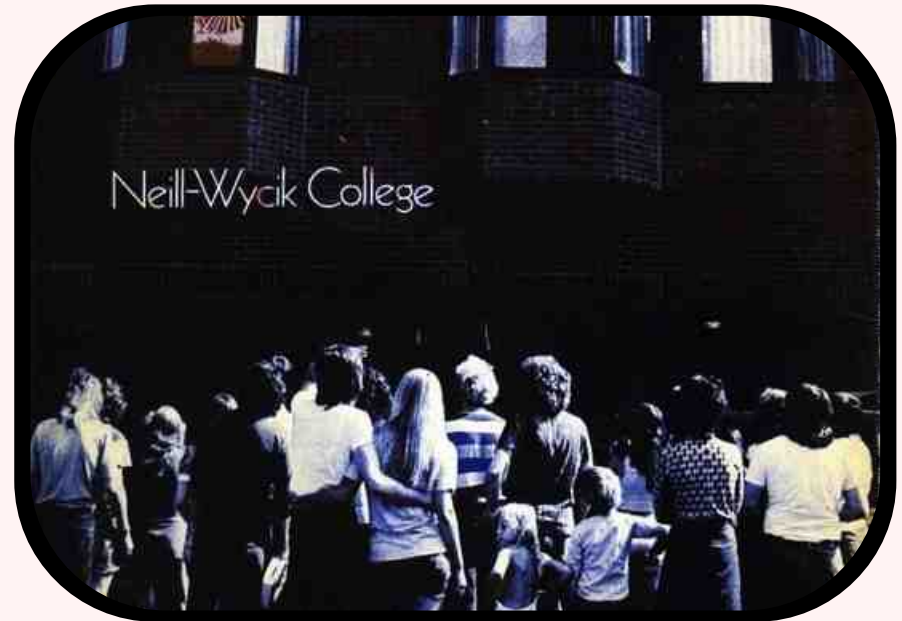
Current



STATE ANALYSIS

After highlighting this problem to the whole Board, they came to the conclusion that immediate research and execution was necessary for this project.

Before any planning could begin, it was important to connect with Housing Staff about their current timelines and processes, and coordinate efforts moving forward.



PROPOSED



Solution

Orientations

Step 1 in the new application process will be to host virtual orientations for potential applicants to attend before applying.

Review

Step 3 is to form a membership committee to review applications. They will be anonymized, graded on a scale of 1-10, and the weighted average score taken.

Applications

Step 2 is to email out applications to people who attended an orientation. Build a robust application and weed out those who may not be suited for co-ops.

Acceptance

Finally, inform highest scoring new members of their acceptance, pass their information along to the Housing Department for further move-in instruction.





Step 1

ORIENTATIONS

Orientation

GOALS



Neill-Wycik Fall 2024
Orientations

Goal 1

Hold orientations prior to membership application

Goal 2

Digitize entire experience to be as accessible as possible

Goal 3

Create a standardized orientation that could be held by multiple people with the same results



ORIENTATIONS

Socials

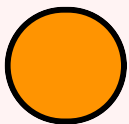
Through our Instagram page, we notified potential applicants about our new acceptance practices and reminded followers through regular posts and stories about deadlines.

Members

Word of mouth, encouraging their friends to apply through the new system

Website

We updated our website informing applicants of the new process very early on. We also used Calendly as an embedded scheduling tool.



• • * * • •

Key

NOTES

- Scheduled: Via a booking app embedded on Neill-Wycik's Website
- Orientation Sessions: Hosted via Zoom with attendee emails collected.
- Conditions:
 - Attending an orientation was mandatory to apply.
 - Attendee emails were collected at the end of each orientation
 - Link to online applications emailed out only to zoom attendees.
- Format:
 - Presentation introducing Neill-Wycik and its mission + general co-operative culture.
 - Question & Answer period
 - Follow up directions regarding applications.



SAC Facilities

All facilities are run by members who volunteer their time!



- Steamer
- Woodshop
- Makerspace (3D Printing Lab)
- Cafe
- Gym
- Sewing Room
- Games Room
- Rooftop Gardens
- Computer Lab
- TV Lounge
- Hanke Lounge
- Meeting Room
- BBQ's



Neill-Wycik Hotel

In the summer term, we operate most of the building as a Hotel.

This allows us to make enough profit that we're able to keep housing costs so low for our members during the school year.

It's also why we only offer 8 month leases.



Orientation



STATISTICS

Totals

- Number of Orientations Hosted - 7
- Period of Time - 4 weeks
- Number of Registered Sign-Ups - 700
- Number of Attendees - 523
- Average Attendance Rate - 75% (177 No Shows)





Step 2

APPLICATIONS

Time to

REVAMP

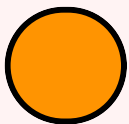


1. Choosing Questions

We wanted to intentionally choose questions that would surmise co-operative fit, while giving applicants a chance to personalize their experiences.

2. Choosing A Platform

The platform we used to create our application had to have several key factors in order to expedite our next step, membership review.

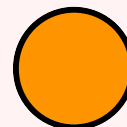


Application



GOALS

- Be intentional and meaningful in our choice of questions.
- Gather important information about applicants to better understand the demographic we are reaching.
- Ensure potential member needs align with co-ops current mission and vision.
- User friendly format, accessibility is key!
- Offer applicants the opportunity to showcase their personalities
- Offer questions that are open ended (no right answers)
- Some questions designed to target information provided in orientation sessions.



Categorizing

QUESTIONS

Section 3 - Co-operative Living Fit

This section assesses the applicant's compatibility with cooperative living. Questions may include:

- **Experience with shared responsibilities and decision-making.**
 - Have you ever lived in a cooperative or shared housing arrangement before? If so, what were the most positive aspects, and what challenges did you face?
 - How comfortable are you with shared living, responsibilities, decision-making, and contributing to the well-being of the community? Please provide examples from your past experiences.
- **Cooperative Principles & Values***
 - From the orientation and introduction to the cooperative principles – what would you say is the principle that resonates with you the most and why?
- **Conflict resolution skills.**
 - Conflict resolution is an essential skill in communal living. Can you share an experience where you successfully resolved a conflict within a group setting?
- **Willingness to participate in communal activities.**
 - In a shared living environment, compromises are often necessary. Describe a situation where you had to compromise for the greater good of a group or community.



New

DESIGN



We decided to use TypeForm to design a welcoming application as well as collect our responses.

Neill-Wycik Co-Operative College

Welcome to our Fall 2024 New Member Application. This application helps us get to know applicants better and evaluate them for membership fit. Please ensure you attend one of the mandatory orientation sessions prior to completing this application.

Applications Close: May 16th @11:59PM EST

Start Application

press Enter ↵

⌚ Takes X minutes



Application



STATISTICS

Totals

- Number of Applications Sent - 523
- Number of Completed Applications - 358
- Total Application Views - 1315
- Total Application Starts - 931
- Average Completion Rate - 38.5%





Step 3

REVIEW



Review

GOALS



- Triple blind review for anonymity (no names)
- Develop Application Review Committee (ARC) comprised of Board Directors and Staff to review all applications at least 3 times
- Develop an simple, effective and fair evaluation framework to adhere to through the entire review process
- A workflow that anonymizes, reviews, consolidate scores and re-ranks the application pool based on performance
- A digital process through which applications can be reviewed
- Ensure incoming membership is engaged in the concept of the co-operative movement



How To

ANONYMIZE

1. Take application, and remove name of applicant. Assign a number from 1-358.
2. Create accounts for reviewers to select anonymized application, and grade from 1-10 in four categories.
3. Average the weight for all four categories as reviewer's final score.
4. Average the weight of all reviewer's scores for final applicant score.
5. Reassign score to applicant and application.
6. Rank applications based on final scores for membership approval.



SAMPLE APPLICATION SUBMISSION

65

Application Number

65

PLEASE SELECT
YOUR STUDENT
STATUS

Canadian Student (Passport/PR)

What are some of
your hobbies, inter-
ests or extracurricu-
lar activities?

As a student athlete on the Women's Soccer Team at TMU, my passion for soccer drives much of my extracurricular focus. Whether it's competing in games, training on the field, or strategizing with my team, soccer is a main part of my life. Through my connections at the athletic department, I am involved in numerous volunteer initiatives, such as Motion Ball, as I am passionate about giving back to the community. Additionally, I am very interested in environmental preservation and sustainability. I have been able to exercise this interest by currently working in Parks and Rec for the City of Burlington.

Would you describe
yourself as more in-
troverted or extro-
verted? Based on
your response, what
are your preferred
social activities to
engage in. (Online,
IRL etc.)

I would describe myself as more extroverted. I prefer to engage in in-person social activities that allow me to connect with the people around me. This includes: TRSM networking events, fundraisers, board/card games, and exploring the city with my friends.

Describe a social
activity, event or
project you were in-
volved in that en-
gaged or impacted a
community in a pos-
itive way - Expand

The most impactful event I have participated in was Motion Ball, which is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to introducing the next generation to the Special Olympics. This was an incredibly rewarding experience that allowed me to connect with other athletes. Through my role as a volunteer, I was responsible for event coordination and participation in the games to raise money. I learnt the importance of teamwork, empathy, and inclusion. Witnessing the joy that this event brought to so many people further solidified my passion for community-driven initiatives.


SAMPLE REVIEW SUBMISSION

 Add a logo

ARC REVIEW FORM

Add a description

Neill-Wycik Fall 2024 Application *

 Add application

ARC Role

Board Member

* Arc Reviewer Initials *

PERSONALITY & INTERESTS

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

* CO-OPERATIVE LIVING FIT

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

* NEILL-WYCIK MEMBERSHIP FIT *

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

Personal Rating *

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

 Clear form

Submit



CHALLENGES

We Faced

Recruitment

Despite remaining hopeful that Board directors would actively join ARC, turnout was low. Reviews were double blind instead of triple.

Logistics

This was a much more time consuming endeavour than anticipated due to lack of shared responsibility.

Designing

Building, monitoring, and effectively managing the review process was way more time consuming than originally estimated

Legal

With new processes comes the potential for new risks. Validate your thinking and processes with legal counsel to identify areas for improvement and concerns.



Review



OUTCOMES

Rounding Up

- Effectively filter out applications with a variety of misalignments/errors
 - Wrong Application Window
 - Ineligible due to student status in application window
 - Incomplete Applications
 - Poor Responses (including clear use of Chat GPT)





Step 4

ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance

GOALS



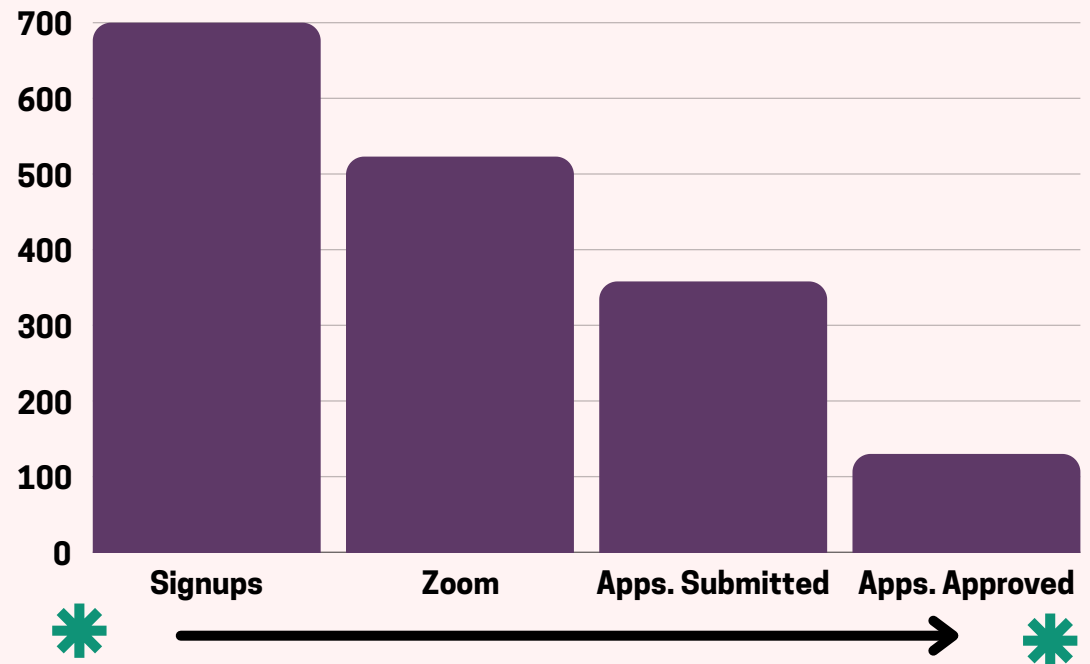
- Provide a list of reviewed and ranked applications for board approval as co-op members.
- Handover the list of approved new members to housing staff to begin member acceptance and placement.
- Successfully onboard new Members!

• • * **Finally** * • •

THE RESULT

Ultimately, we were able to ensure our new cohort of members were better aware of the co-operative model, who we are, and how they fit into our community before they even finished applying.

While some may see it as a detriment to see numbers shrink at every step, we feel confident that those who are genuinely interested in co-op living were able to represent themselves in our new application process





Final

LESSONS LEARNED

Timing is Everything

While we were able to successfully complete the project, there were several delays that pushed the date of acceptance for new members back. This is something that was at times unavoidable, yet resulted in acceptances being issued to new members much later than we would have liked.

Retrofitting is Hard

In an effort to ease housing staff into the new process, we tried to retrofit the old housing acceptance process into the new one. However, it resulted in some unexpected difficulties getting staff to fully adopt the new process and disregard the old one.



RESOURCES



TOOLS & PLATFORMS

PHASE 0: CURRENT STATE ANALYSIS & MAPPING

- **NOTION** - Research, Ideating & Information Gathering
- **MIRO** - Mind Maps, Process Mapping & Workflow Development

PHASE 1: ONLINE ORIENTATION

- **CALENDLY** - Scheduling Online Orientations via ZOOM + Calendar Integrations & Reminders
- **COOP Website & socials** - Advertise and develop custom webpages outlining the new process
- **ZOOM** - Hosting the online orientations

PHASE 2: ONLINE APPLICATIONS

- **TYPEFORM** - Hosting the online application

PHASE 3: APPLICATION REVIEWS

- **AIRTABLE** - Application processing, reviewing & scoring
- **GOOGLE SHEETS** - Application consolidation & sharing

PHASE 4: MEMBER ACCEPTANCE & HOUSING PLACEMENT

- **GMAIL** - Outreach and communicate acceptances



RESOURCES



FREE* ALTERNATIVES

PHASE 0: CURRENT STATE ANALYSIS & MAPPING

- **GOOGLE DOCS** - Research, Ideating & Information Gathering
- **FIGMA/FIGJAM** - Mind Maps, Process Mapping & Workflow Development

PHASE 1: ONLINE ORIENTATION

- **GOOGLE CALENDAR** - Scheduling Online Orientations
- **GOOGLE MEET** - Hosting the online orientations

PHASE 2: ONLINE APPLICATIONS

- **GOOGLE FORMS / YOUFORMS** - Hosting the online application

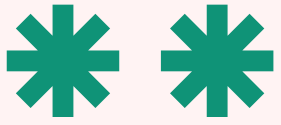
PHASE 3: APPLICATION REVIEWS

- **CODA** - Application processing, reviewing & scoring
- **GOOGLE SHEETS** - Application consolidation & sharing

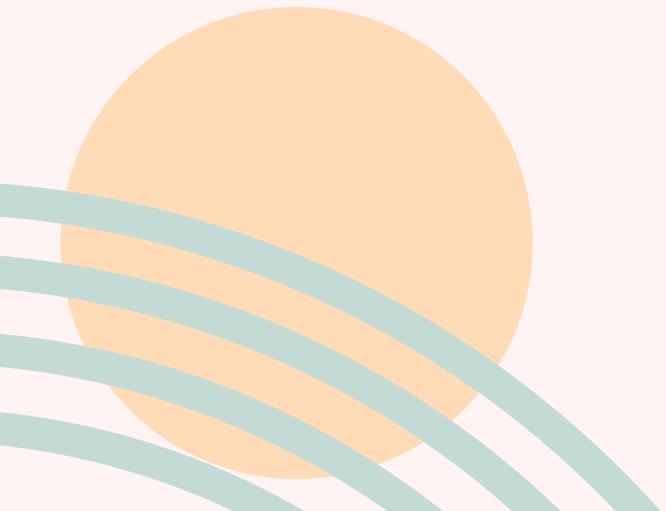
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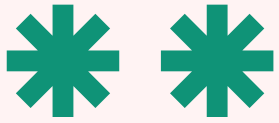
- **GMAIL** - Outreach and communicate acceptances





QUESTIONS?





THANK YOU

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