

# Indeed Brewing Company Culture Audit Findings & Action Plan

## Context

Indeed Brewing Company engaged [tHRive Law & Consulting](#) in May 2021 to conduct a culture audit at Indeed Brewing. A culture audit reviews the overall health of the organization, from how employees feel, areas of manager and employee concern, why employees stay with the organization, and where the organization can improve.

The letter below outlines the findings and recommendations from that audit. Based on the recommendations from tHRive, we have included the actions we have committed to to better our business.

## Findings

### Lack of shared vision and values

tHRive Law & Consulting found that Indeed lacks a shared vision in a few key areas: a lack of fun; turf battles over what Indeed makes and why, with the perception that sales drives decisions without input from production; and a negative interpretation of Indeed's core values of "Be Committed" and "Think Different" by some employees.

### Bias

tHRive Law & Consulting found that bias does exist at Indeed. Specific examples revealed language loaded with stereotypical gender bias directed toward female employees, including that they are "not confident enough" or "too emotional," "too anxious," "too stressed," or "not committed." Additionally, racial bias has impacted Indeed, in the specific case of a Japanese rice lager that was branded with a racially insensitive name; the name was pulled before it reached the public, but the company's inability to see the issue in the first place gives employees pause. Finally, the audit found that the [Entrepreneurial Operating System \(EOS\)](#) also intensifies bias as it cuts "through all the feelings, personalities, opinions and egos and boiling your organization down to a handful of objective numbers that give you an absolute pulse on where things are." By focusing only on numbers or data, employees feel their own unique humanness is not seen or considered by Indeed, which allows bias to remain a blindspot for managers and leadership.

### Us vs. them

An "us vs. them" mentality runs rampant throughout Indeed. At times, the "us" is employees in all departments with the "them" as the leadership team. At others, the "them" is Sales with the "us" being all other employees. Sometimes, "us" is the rest of the company while "them" is specific members of leadership, including the Chief Operation Officer and Sales Director. The "us vs. them" perception is

amplified by hiring decisions in leadership. Employees believe leaders have been hired because they are liked by the CEO, COO, and Sales Director rather than for their skills, knowledge, and experience.

## Management swooping and catastrophizing

Instead of empowering teams to execute on a particular idea or project, the CEO, COO, and/or Sales Director ignore the process and expertise of managers and teams, swoop in, create chaos, swoop out, and complain that the idea or project was not flawless. This feeds a perception of perfectionism as the goal and that only with the CEO, COO, and/or Sales Director's input will anything actually be flawless. The resulting culture created by this swooping and catastrophizing is that some employees walk around the brewery on eggshells with little confidence that they are secure in their positions.

## Little to no recognition

Employees shared that they received very little recognition or gratitude during a particularly challenging year, with health and safety regulations changing constantly and shifting the demands of nearly everyone at Indeed. When recognition has been given, tHRive Law & Consulting found that it has been given to individuals others view as favorites of the CEO, COO, or Sales Director, not the folks who have been putting in excessive hours to achieve goals.

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# tHRive Law & Consulting Recommendations & Indeed Brewing's Action Plan

tHRive Law & Consulting provided Indeed Brewing with four recommendations based on the findings above. The recommendations are listed below. Next to each recommendation, we have added Indeed Brewing's measurable action plan to achieve the specific recommendation.

tHRive Law & Consulting Recommendation	Indeed Brewing Action Plan
<p><b>1. People &amp; Communities Leader (Human Resource Leader)</b></p> <p>The most important and urgent recommendation is the creation and hire of a Director of People position. Indeed needs a formalized human resources executive as a part of the leadership team. This position is both a resource and a challenge to leadership when making people decisions. For example, if a leader wants to terminate an individual, the People &amp; Communities Leader must be consulted and any criticism should be, at the very least, considered if not heeded.</p>	<p><b>By the end of Q4 2021, Indeed will hire a People &amp; Communities Leader.</b></p> <p>Among standard human resource responsibilities, the People &amp; Communities leader will provide employees a trusted, professional resource to raise concerns when they do not feel comfortable going to their department heads.</p> <p>While the leadership team will be holding each other accountable for change, the People &amp; Communities leader will be empowered to hold the overall responsibility of other leaders.</p> <p>Measurables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ By 8/15/2021, Indeed will partner with a third party HR representative to be an interim resource for staff to raise concerns, and to assist in the hiring process for our permanent People &amp; Communities Leader.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ COMPLETE</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ By 9/30/2021, Indeed will be prepared to offer a position to a full time People &amp; Communities Leader.</li> <li>■ By 10/30/2021, a full time People &amp; Communities Leader will begin their role and be on-boarded with the findings from tHRive Law &amp; Consulting, including the recommendations from the audit results.</li> </ul>

**2. Entrepreneurial Operating System Revamp**  
Indeed adopted EOS three years ago. It provided necessary structure and accountability to the leadership team and mid-level managers. However, EOS has also created problems.

EOS has created barriers to success with some managers trying to shoehorn the written concepts onto positions where those concepts are not suited. Moreover, as one leader appropriately described, the tools of EOS can quickly “turn into a weapon” when making people decisions. In addition, EOS’s philosophy around data is contradictory to its ethos as an “engaged and community-oriented brewery.”

Leadership should evaluate what about EOS is working and what is not. This is an important, but not as urgent task.

**By December 31, 2021, Indeed will reevaluate its company operation system (Entrepreneurial Operating System) through the lens of creating a more equitable, safe, and positive work environment.**

Measurables:

- By 10/30/2021, a full time People & Communities Leader will begin their role and be on-boarded with the resources needed to learn Indeed’s relationship with EOS, including but not limited to: the Indeed employee handbook, EOS books “What the Heck Is EOS?” and “How to be a Great Boss”, Indeed’s VisionTraction Organizer, and the results of the audit conducted by tHRive.
- By 12/02/2021, Indeed’s People & Communities Leader will provide recommendations for how Indeed should utilize or reevaluate EOS within the company.
- By 12/31/2021, Indeed’s Leadership Team and middle managers will begin implementation of the People & Communities Leader’s recommendations.

**3. Management Training & Support**  
Many managers and leaders have little-to-no management or leadership experience. Yet, they are expected to understand and hold employees accountable without it. With the assistance of a human resources executive, it is critical that managers and leaders learn how to set expectations, communicate those expectations, hold employees and each other accountable, and most importantly, develop relationships with staff so staff feel heard, respected, and valued.

Getting management training and support is an important and urgent task, one for which a Director of People should be tasked with.

**By December 31, 2021 Indeed will develop a program for management training and support, including regular bias training, interview training, and anti-harassment training.**

Measurables:

- By 10/30/2021, a full time People & Communities Leader will begin their role and be on-boarded.
- By 12/02/2021, Indeed’s People & Communities Leader will provide a recommended plan and proposed budget for a new management training program required for all Indeed managers.
- By 12/31/2021, Indeed will have a solidified schedule of the 2022 management training plan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 1/30/2021, members of Indeed management team will participate in their first part of programming for the management training, which will continue indefinitely.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Vision Alignment</b> Indeed must define what the future of the company looks like in terms of people, and how it will position itself in the market, including what it will produce. It is important that employees have a say and their viewpoint is heard and valued. No organization has to adopt specifically what employees want to their exacting specifications but seeking to understand their perspective while implementing what the organization can create the engagement and ownership employees want and need to love their jobs. If employees cannot see themselves doing their jobs at Indeed, doing what they love, then they will find themselves elsewhere.</p>	<p><b>By October 30, 2022 Indeed will create a clear roadmap for the 3 year, and 10 year picture of the company, focusing on it's people, how Indeed will position itself in the market, and what beverages it will produce.</b></p> <p>Measurables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 9/30/21, Indeed has developed an annual business planning process, with a draft of the 2022 business plan, including projections, forecasts, budgets, capex, and departmental plans.</li> <li>By 10/19/2021, Indeed will have a full staff workshop day, where every member of the Indeed team will have the opportunity to share their vision of Indeed's future.</li> <li>By 11/1/2021, feedback from the full staff workshop day will be digested and incorporated into the final version of the annual plan for 2022 and beyond.</li> <li>By 07/01/2021, Indeed's Leadership Team will establish a system for hearing staff's vision for Indeed regularly. Input will be gathered and used in the development of one year, three year, and 10 year pictures of Indeed's future.</li> <li>By 10/30/2022, using the input from all employees, Indeed will create the 3 year and 10 year picture of the company's future, and present to staff.</li> </ul> <p><b>By 11/30/2021, Indeed will revise the way it portrays its company history to depict a more inclusive and accurate origin of the company.</b></p> <p>Measurables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 9/30/21, Indeed will have replaced the mural image of co-owner Tom Whisensand, co-owner Nathan Berndt, and founding brewer Josh Bischoff in its taproom.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ COMPLETE</li><li>● By 10/30/21, Indeed will identify each platform portraying an inaccurate version of the company's history including but not limited to: company website, employee handbook, press boilerplate, brewery tour information, company biography at festivals, and sales materials.</li><li>● By 11/30/2021, Indeed will update the language used on the identified platforms to depict a more inclusive and accurate origin of the company.</li></ul>
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