



Case Study: Identity-Driven Operations:

How the World's Most Successful Firms use "Be-Do-Have" to Win

In the world of corporate turnaround and scaling, leaders often obsess over the "Having"—the quarterly revenue, the market share, and the exit valuation. To reach these goals, they focus on the "Doing"—the checklists, the KPIs, and the relentless grind. Yet, the most resilient organizations in history operate in the exact opposite direction. They understand that sustainable success is an "inside-out" process: you must first Be the right organization to Do the right things, which inevitably leads to the results you want to Have.

Below are six case studies of Fortune 500 giants that leveraged the Be-Do-Have framework to transform their industries.

Apple: The Discipline of Simplicity

Since its inception, Apple's success has been rooted in a specific marketing philosophy drafted in 1977: Empathy, Focus, and Impute. [²]

- The Shift: Apple decided to Be a company at the intersection of technology and liberal arts.
- The Result: Because they Are empathetic and focused, they Do the hard work of saying "no" to thousands of features to keep a product simple. Consequently, they Have the highest brand loyalty and profit margins in consumer electronics.

Microsoft: From "Know-it-All" to "Learn-it-All"

Before 2014, Microsoft was defined by a rigid, siloed culture of internal competition—a "Know-it-All" identity. When Satya Nadella took over as CEO, he didn't just change the product roadmap; he changed the company's "Being." * The Shift: Nadella championed a "Growth Mindset," moving the identity from "Know-it-Alls" to "Learn-it-Alls." [¹]

- The Result: This shift in identity changed what employees Did—they began to collaborate and innovate across departments. Today, Microsoft Has reclaimed its spot as a global leader in Cloud and AI.

Southwest Airlines: The Servant's Heart

Southwest has remained consistently profitable in an industry known for bankruptcy by anchoring its operations in a specific "Way of Being."

- The Shift: They hire for a "Warrior Spirit" and a "Servant's Heart." [³]
- The Result: Because the staff identifies as servants first, they Do whatever it takes to help—pilots loading bags or flight attendants entertaining passengers. This culture allows them to Have a 15-minute gate turnaround time that competitors cannot replicate.

Patagonia: The Activist Identity

Patagonia proves that a clear identity makes operational decisions easy.

- The Shift: They do not identify as an apparel company; they Are an activist organization. [^4]
- The Result: Because they Are activists, they Do things like suing to protect public lands and telling customers "Don't Buy This Jacket" to discourage waste. Despite (or because of) this, they Have a billion-dollar brand with a cult-like following.

Zappos: Delivering Happiness through Identity

Zappos is often cited as the ultimate example of a company that prioritizes "Being" over "Doing" to achieve extraordinary market results.

- The Shift: Under the leadership of Tony Hsieh, Zappos decided to Be a service organization that just happens to sell shoes. Their core identity was defined by "Delivering Happiness" and a commitment to a quirky, family-like culture. [^6]
- The Result: Because they Are a service-first organization, they Do things that would be considered "inefficient" by traditional standards—such as having no time limits on customer service calls and offering new hires \$2,000 to quit to ensure only those aligned with the identity remain. Consequently, they Have achieved legendary customer retention and a \$1.2 billion acquisition by Amazon.

Toyota: Living the Philosophy

Many companies try to copy the "Toyota Production System" (the Doing) but fail because they ignore "The Toyota Way" (the Being).

- The Shift: Toyota identifies as a "Learning Organization" committed to *Kaizen* (continuous improvement) and "Respect for People." [^5]
- The Result: Because they Are committed to learning, workers Do stop the assembly line the moment a defect is found. This enables them to Have the world's most efficient manufacturing process and a reputation for unmatched quality.

The Bottom Line for Your Business

If you want to change what your organization Has, you cannot simply change what it Does. You must start at the root: Who are you being? When the identity is aligned, the actions become automatic, and the results become inevitable.

At Be Do Have Inc., we help startups and small companies architect this alignment through systems optimization and AI-driven productivity.

References & Footnotes

[^1]:Microsoft Inside Track. (2025). *Digitally Transforming Microsoft: Our IT Journey*. [Microsoft.com](https://microsoft.com)

[^2]:Steve Jobs Archive. (1977). *The Apple Marketing Philosophy by Mike Markkula*. stevejobsarchive.com

[^3]:Southwest Airlines. (2023). *Southwest Airlines Code of Conduct: We Embody the Southwest Heart*. southwest.com

[^4]:The Comm Spot. (2025). *CSR Case Study: Patagonia's Environmental Activism*. thecommspot.com

[^5]:Toyota Motor Corporation. (2024). *Toyota Production System: Vision & Philosophy*. global.toyota

[^6]:Hsieh, T. (2010). *Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose*. Business Plus.