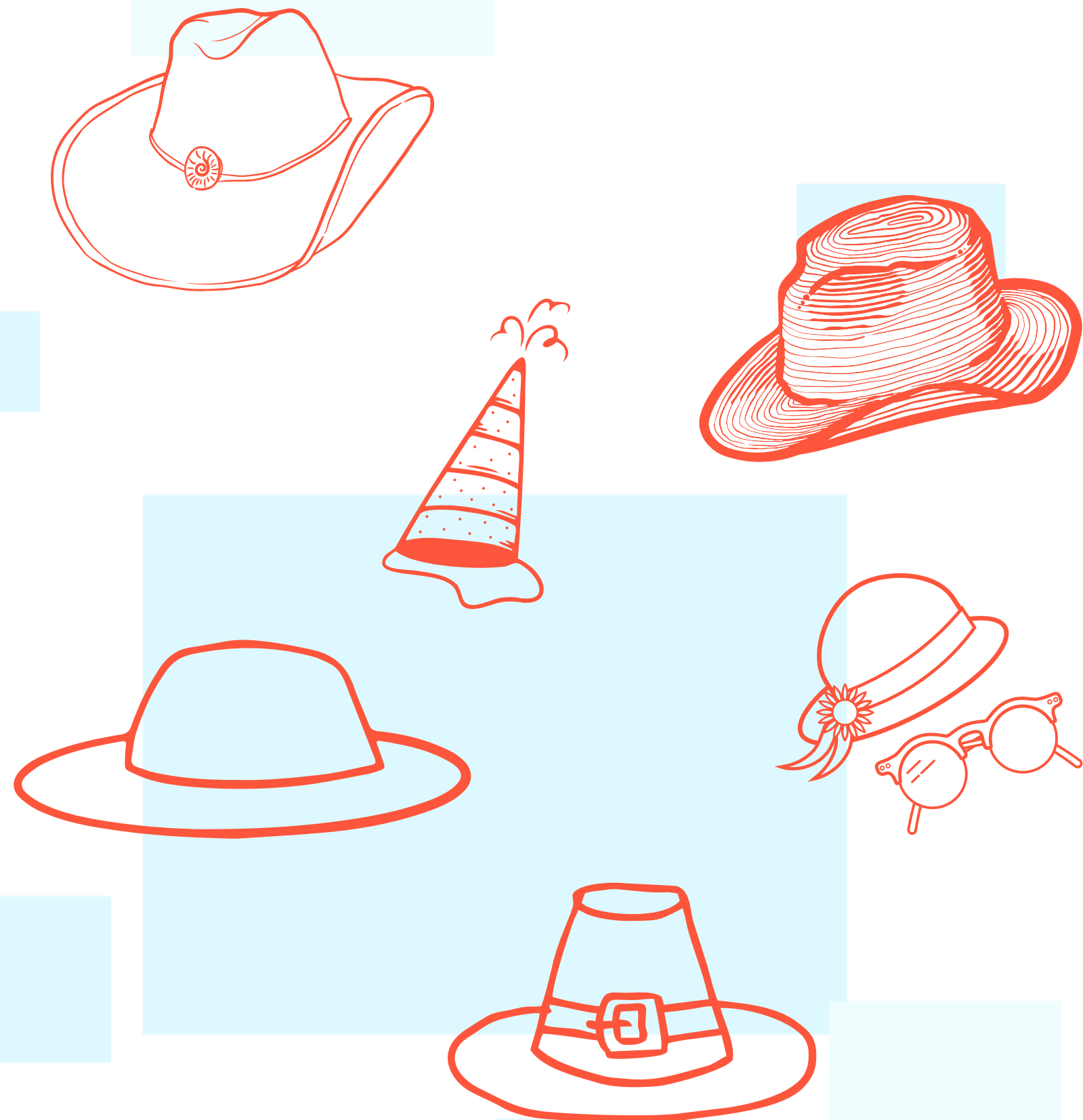


6 Required Roles for Successful Ad Product Teams





Introduction

Regardless of team size, you'll need to fill six essential roles to create a successful ad product.

Think of these roles as "hats" to be worn--individuals can fill more than one.

In any case, all six roles are required for a well-designed, well-functioning, profitable ad product.

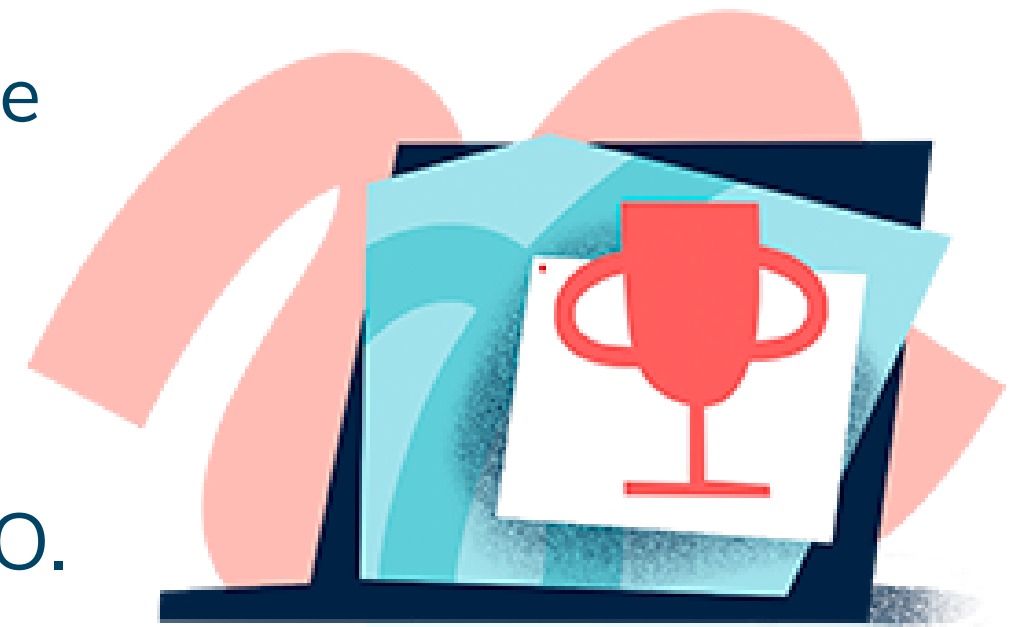
1

The Champion

The Champion is the instigator: they identify business opportunities, define goals, requirements, and oversee initial ad product implementation. They continuously advocate for the product across the organization.

This is a big picture role. The Champion thinks in terms of the advertising market and where their users fit. They set the strategy and vision and promoting it.

At a small company, this role may be filled by the CEO or CTO. In larger companies, you generally find the Champion is a senior product manager, often the VP of Product.



Without the Champion...

- Lack of product strategy
- Slow or nonexistent decision-making
- Success metrics not created/met
- No allocation for ad product resources

2

The Architect

The Architect executes the Champion's vision. They know the existing product constraints and implement a solution that won't introduce (too many) new technical costs and risks. After completing the initial iteration, they continue fixing bugs and adding new features.

They don't need to be advertising experts, but they need to learn enough to understand the Champion's requirements. The Architect can be a single software engineer for small implementations, but the role can easily stretch to specialized teams of hundreds.



Without the Architect...

- Product doesn't evolve with the market
- Bugs go unfixed, revenue is lost
- Advertisers lose confidence in the platform

3 The Project Manager

The Project Manager asks, “What’s the current state of X?”

They transform the Champion’s goals and the Architect’s tasks into actionable steps, then track those through completion. They ask questions, keep detailed, accessible meeting notes, and act as an information hub for the other five hats.

Once the iteration is complete, the Project Manager collects feedback, analyzes potential improvements, and re-starts the cycle. The Project Manager doesn’t have to be someone with the title of project manager, let alone a PMP. This can be a unique role or a secondary hat worn by anyone.



Without the Product Manager...

- No coordination
- Competing priorities that delay iterations
- Milestones unclear and unmet
- Product can't respond to fast-changing requirements

4 The Salesperson

The Salesperson drives the ad product's growth through direct sales, programmatic, internal promotions, self-serve platforms, sponsorships, etc.

Having a new platform isn't enough to attract advertisers. They need to understand your audience and your ROI. The Salesperson articulates that value proposition and promotes it to the brands aligned with your audience. They push for Advertise with Us pages and Media Kits to pitch to advertisers.

The Salesperson's work is what drives the revenue. This hat can be worn by someone in Sales or Marketing, or the Champion or Project Manager as well.



Without the Salesperson...

- No new revenue growth
- Value proposition not articulated to advertisers
- Advertiser relationships suffer

5 Ad Ops

Ad Operations (Ad Ops) runs the day-to-day ad product operations. They set-up the campaigns, approve brand-safe content, monitor performance, and ensure correct billing.

Ad Ops must be extremely detail-oriented and understand the in-depth needs of individual advertisers. Given Ad Ops's thorough knowledge of the product's capabilities and limits, their feedback is critical for iteration by the Champion and Architect.

For most companies, the Ad Ops specialist will be someone specifically to do Ad Ops.



Without Ad

Ops....

- Ad serving errors increase, go unreported
- Refunds for issues could make the product unprofitable
- Advertiser feedback isn't communicated
- Advertisers lose trust

6 The Data Scientist

The Data Scientist integrates and analyzes the outputs of the ad serving process (like impressions, events, and their associated revenue). They discover which variables will maximize product yield (aka, how to improve the ad product to drive more revenue). Their data feeds into the Champion's decision-making, measures the ad product's success, and influences its next iteration.

The Data Scientist should simply be someone who can analyze even basic data, like which ad units drive revenue, how targeting influences click-through-rates, and overall advertiser growth.



Without the Data Scientist...

- Success metrics no longer based on data
- New opportunities for growth go unidentified
- Greater organization unable to see quantitative value

Conclusion

As you can see, when any role is unfilled, the organization may have reason enough to cancel the ad product. But that's not inevitable: team members can start wearing new or additional hats to put the ad product on the path to success.

Take Back the Internet

Kevel's mission is to help brands drive more online revenue and take back the Internet from the ad tech giants and digital monopolies.

We believe every publisher should be able to take back their revenue, user experience, and data — while growing their business through user-first advertising.

