



By David Cawthon  
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## The 6 'Hats' You Need to Be a Successful Kansas City Entrepreneur

Any entrepreneur knows (and any aspiring business owner will find out) that early on, you've got to wear all the hats if you want your business to succeed: You are the marketer, the bookkeeper, the creative, the CEO, the salesperson, the project manager, etc.

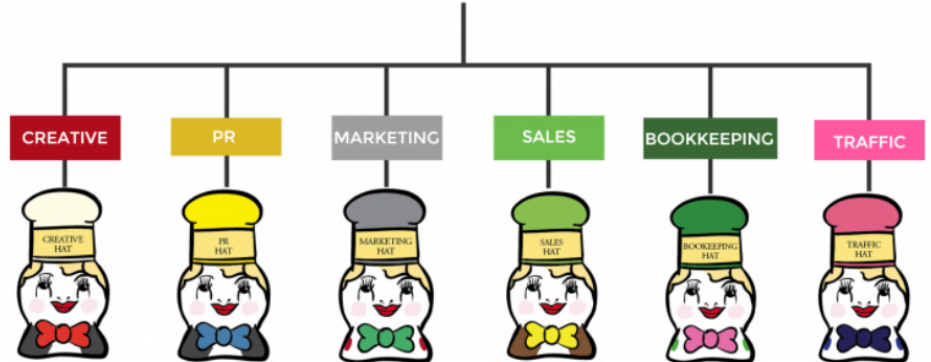
But how do you keep all those caps square on your head so you can do everything well ... and manage your time effectively?

Robin Blakely, from the [Creative Center of America](#) in Lee's Summit, Missouri, has names for each of these six hats and (bonus) for those who tuned in for her digital talk with [SCORE Kansas City](#) (linked at the end of this blog), she has some tips to help you manage your business ... and these tips are great for any entrepreneur who's new to small business, as well as any existing owner who might need to tune up his or her operations. (By the way, SCORE offers a whole slew of online courses, in-person training and free mentoring from former business owners. [Let us know if you need an introduction.](#))

If you want to try on each of these hats and get them tailored for your business, check out [the KC metro's most comprehensive business calendar](#) and get help with finances, marketing, sales and much, much more.

## SIX HATS METHOD

Organizing The Hats You Need to Succeed



## The six hats you'll wear as a KC small-business owner

Each hat corresponds to a specific facet of your business you'll have to tackle as the founder:

1. Creative
2. Bookkeeping
3. Traffic
4. Public Relations
5. Marketing
6. Sales

We'll cover each of these a bit more later, but first, here are some important things to keep in mind, according to Robin, in regards to these hats.

As a new business owner, you'll have plenty to juggle, so Robin recommends in the beginning that you **focus on the hat that will have the biggest impact on your bottom line** or **identify the hat that needs the most help or the one that robs you of your energy**. Why is this important? Because knowing how to use your resources wisely will help you grow your business (and obviously) help you make more money.

Robin says to think of each hat as an employee because each represents a facet of your business that will help you grow your operation. You can't neglect an employee, so make sure you're not neglecting one of these hats.

And in some cases, Robin says you might reach a point where the demands of the business might force you to consider contracting or outsourcing certain facets, but she also cautions that you also need to be familiar on some level with each of these hats, even if you are outsourcing certain jobs. Because **you** are the CEO.





## The First 3 Hats Vital to Your Business Operations

Here's a quick overview of the function of the primary three hats. These functions are key for your business and will ensure that your internal operations are running as they should:

### 1. The Creative Hat

This hat fuels the inspiration and the ideas that get you moving in a new direction. It also feeds off what you're passionate about and what you aspire to do in the future. It is the curator of your products and services, Robin says.

### 2. Bookkeeping Hat

Finance is the word with this hat: It monitors your money, keeps tabs on expenses and revenue and tracks who pays and who gets paid. This hat is great for doing the groundwork now so that when tax time rolls around, you're ready because your bookkeeping was solid all year long.

### 3. Traffic Hat

Management skills are important for any entrepreneur. This hat is the supervisor who manages projects and coordinates deadlines: daily, monthly, quarterly and annually. It helps you allocate resources wisely and forces you to look at the time, people and energy needed to complete a task.

These three hats should always be top-of-mind, but make sure you have enough tools for each and ensure that you make enough time for each. When you forget one of these three hats, your business suffers because as an entrepreneur, you need to fulfill each of these in some way in order for your business to succeed and eventually grow and scale. Robin says being mindful of these hats will help you "establish a sense of professional calm" and create a foundation for your business that's scalable so when it's time to grow, things are already in place.



# The 3 Hats That Will Grow Your Business

Hats No. 4 through No. 6 are focused externally and help you grow your business, increase brand awareness, reach more customers, close sales and more. But before you move on to these next components, make sure you know how to manage the first three hats we discussed; that foundation will prime you to handle this next trio. Robin says you should think of these last three hats as a team, each one laying the groundwork for the next until a sale is made.

## 4. Public Relations Hat

This hat essentially tells the world about what you're doing and raises awareness about your company with the public. You should ask yourself this: Do I actively seek awareness for my company through community networking, social media and traditional media?

## 5. Marketing Hat

Marketing uses the groundwork from public relations, which created awareness about your company and brand, to connect to the pool of potential customers and partners PR cultivated. It helps if you've organized your target market into niches and that you're building databases and promotional campaigns that align with those targets. This hat lets you better connect with those people so you can tell them about your company.

## 6. Sales Hat

This hat interfaces with the customers marketing has curated to (obviously) sell them products and services. If public relations and marketing have done their jobs, sales will bring that hard work across the finish line in the form of revenue.



## Get the Most Out of Each Hat

Now that all these hats are in your entrepreneurial closet, Robin says you should ask yourself:

- Do you know each of these six hats well?
- How strongly do you handle the common conflicts your hats face?
- Have you provided appropriate work tools for each hat to succeed at its specific job?
- Have you given specific direction about what each is supposed to do and when?

And if you're wondering how to prioritize each of these hats, think about which needs help first. Not every hat fits everyone, and the same goes here: Your situation will be unique, based on your strengths and weaknesses as well as your business stage, business type, goals, etc. Robin does recommend carving out time to think about the role each hat plays in your business. She also recommends organizing using visual aids on a bulletin board or table top to help you parse out what's going well and what needs work.

If you want to see Robin Blakely's full presentation on the SCORE website (for free), [just register here](#).

And if you want help getting your footing with any aspect of your new (or existing ... or future) business, over 240 organizations in the KC metro are ready to help you. Just give us friendly folks here at KCSourceLink a call at 816-235-6500 or [tell us a bit about what you need](#), and we'll craft your free personal action plan that'll outline the next steps for your business, no matter which hats you need help with.



*A top business coach with an extensive background in business development and strategic planning, Robin Blakely is the CEO of [Creative Center of America](#) and a member of the Forbes Coaches Council. Robin is also the author of four business books, which include *PR Therapy*.*