Kickstarter is a crowdfunding site where projects can go from idea to reality due to consumer demand and engagement. The campaign runs for a set amount of time and has to reach a fundraising goal in order to succeed. Most campaigns give perks, often the product if it is physical, depending on the amount of money donated to the campaign. The campaign is listed under a category and sub-category to help people find campaigns that they want to support.

The first factor to consider is category. The categories are as follows:

* Film & video
* Food
* Games
* Journalism
* Music
* Photography
* Publishing
* Technology
* Theater

The outcomes by category are shown in figure 1. Only campaigns that have succeeded, failed, or been canceled are shown as their outcome is known. Figure 2 shows the percentage of success, failure, and cancelation for each category.

A screenshot of a cell phone

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Figure 1. Outcomes by Kickstarter category.

Because all of the journalism campaigns have been canceled, they will not be considered past this point.

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Figure 2. Percentage successful, failed, and canceled by category. Note that film & video, music, and theater all have success rates above 50%.

Each category has multiple sub-categories, which can have varying levels of success. Take for example the film & video category, where the subcategories of documentary, shorts, or television have a 100% success rate and the subcategories of animation, drama, and science fiction have a 100% failure rate (where failure is the combination of failed campaigns and canceled campaigns). The same effect can be seen in the games category, where tabletop games are successful and mobile/video games fail, or the food category, where small batch succeeds and food trucks and restaurants fail. Figure 3 shows the outcomes for the publishing sub-categories and figure 4 shows the technology sub-categories.

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Figure 3. Outcomes for the publishing subcategory. Note that nonfiction and radio & podcasts are successful while art, children's, fiction, and translations have a 0% success rate.

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Figure 4. Outcomes for technology subcategory. Although the success is not binary by subcategory, there are subcategories that have higher success rates.

Another factor of success is the timing of the campaign. Figure 5 shows the percentage successful, failed, and canceled depending on when the campaign was launched.

A close up of a map

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Figure 5. Percentage successful, failed, and canceled by launch month.

It appears that the beginning of the year is the most successful time to launch a campaign. November also seems to be a good time to launch a campaign, possibly due to holiday gift giving.

The last factor that determines the success of the campaign is the goal. If the goal is not met during the campaign, the campaign fails. Having a lower campaign goal makes in order to succeed the campaign, but in order to be profitable, some campaigns might have to raise more money than others. Figure 6 shows the percent successful, failed, and canceled based on the goal.

A close up of a map

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Figure 6. Percentage successful, failed, and canceled by goal.

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Figure 7. Average donation for each category.

From figure 7, it can be seen that the technology category has a much higher average donation than the other categories. Even the failed and canceled technology campaigns have a higher average donation that all other categories, other than the successful photography campaigns. Figure 8 shows the average donation for each technology sub-category. An interesting find is that the canceled campaigns for space exploration and wearables have a higher average donation than the successful campaigns. This implies that their goal for the canceled campaigns is much higher than the successful ones but could also be due to the projects hitting major roadblocks and losing feasibility.

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Figure 8. Average donation for the technology sub-categories.

Conclusions

* Kickstarter campaigns that are in the arts are more likely to succeed than other categories.
  + Film & video, music and theater all have success rates over 50%.
  + Photography has a success rate of ~45%.
* Technology has a much higher average donation than other categories but had an overall success rate of ~35%.
* Physical products seemed to be preferred over non-physical products in technology and games.

Limitations of the dataset

* No information of perks.
  + Levels offered
    - Product
    - Access to project
* Not the full data for all of Kickstarter history.
* No information on engagement on page (video, images, wording)

Other analysis

* Percentages (included)
* Average donation (included)
* Distributions of donations by category/sub-category