The median rather than the mean seems to provide a superior meaning in explaining outcomes. Box and whisker graphs show that for each major category (successful, failed, canceled), the distributions are largely concentrated within the IQR bounds and seem to be bell curve shaped, but that between 11% and 16% of each category range consists of outliers, some quite far above the range, which clearly skews the mean.

And as for variability, the standard deviation for backer counts by major category (successful, failed, canceled), the ratio of STD-Success to STD-Canceled is a factor of nearly 8x (specifically 7.8x). And the ratio of STD-Success to STD-Failed is a factor of nearly 14x (specifically 13.7x). This greater variability for successful makes sense somewhat because of successful campaigns tend to attract a larger number of backers. But it doesn’t explain the intrinsic causes for the variability, which is likely related to category, management team reputation, levels of interest by sector, etc.