Excel Challenge Summary

Looking at this specific data set, we can draw the following conclusions about Kickstarter campaigns, in general:

1. From 2009 - 2017, more campaigns ended in success than in failure/cancelation, but only by a small margin (approximately three percentage points);
2. Campaigns launched in May and June see the highest rate of success, possibly because this is after tax season and still several months away from the holidays;
3. The majority of Kickstarter campaigns are in the theatre category, followed by music, then film. However, campaigns in the music category have the greatest rate of success, followed by theatre, then film.

One limitation of this dataset is that campaign categories are unevenly represented (e.g. 1,394 theatre projects vs. 24 journalism projects), and it is not clear whether this distribution is truly representative of all Kickstarter campaigns since the creation of the platform, or if it is just one skewed sample. Another limitation, in a similar vein to the first, is that this dataset spans eight years, but not every category is represented in each year. For example, there are no examples in this dataset of journalism projects prior to 2014, while there are film & video projects that go as far back as 2009. Does this mean there were no journalism projects in 2009, period? This omission unfairly weights certain categories over others, as they have broader representation across time.

Some other possible tables and/or graphs we could create to help fill in some of these gaps would be success/failure rates of subcategories based on year. We might also look at a project’s success rate compared to its “staff pick” status. If “staff pick” implies that this project received special attention on the homepage, or some other kind of elevation, this may have had more of an impact on the project’s success than its category or launch date.