Kickstarter Analysis:

Broad Conclusions

We can use Kickstarter data in a variety of ways to provide analysis, not just on how to run successful campaigns ourselves, but on broader trends in populations and difficulties faced by various business ventures. Below are three different specific analyses targeting each of the above topics:

-*Over time, a given Kickstarter’s chance at success has decreased*

If we observe the success rate of a Kickstarter campaign by year, we notice that there occurred a single month prior to 2014 when the number of failed campaigns outnumbered successful ones. Starting in 2014, for every single full year there have been months where failed campaigns outnumber successful ones, and the number of months in each successive year where this is true trends upwards. This is most likely due to waning excitement about the technology as time progressed, as well as a lack of seriousness in certain later campaigns (illustrated further below). This suggests our analysis for campaigns we ourselves may want to begin should be more heavily biased towards recent years in order to gain a more accurate picture of how to accurately set our goals and metrics.

-*The universal failure of animation shows the financial barriers facing animated media is greater than that of other forms of media*

It’s well known that animation is expensive. We could conclude based on this data that animation is simply unpopular, but, on the contrary, it has experienced a renaissance beginning well before the time frame of this data. It is therefore more prudent to conclude two things: the generally younger audience of animation is less financially fluid and stable and the cost per backer is simply too great to succeed on the platform. If we were to start our own animation company, we may very well be successful, but it would be within our interests to become subsidiaries of a larger corporation to acquire initial funding of our project.

-*Theater is alive and well in Great Britain*

You may be tempted to note that more campaigns total and more successful campaigns specifically have occurred in the USA, but further analysis on total population make it clear that while Great Britain has about 1/5 of the population of the USA (67M to 329M) they have significantly more than a third of the relative theater campaigns (359 to 912). Running the numbers exactly show that theater is about twice as popular in Great Britain. Further, about 72% of their theater campaigns are successful vs 58% for the US.

Data Limitations

Despite the useful analyses provided above it is clear that the data has severe limitations and almost any aggregate analysis based on anything other than success rate is most likely noise. Three such limitations are listed below in brief:

-*Extreme outliers*

The outliers in this data are more extreme than most! First there are the projects with absurd goals which are universally failed. In fact, of the 46 highest goals, all are failed or canceled, almost all failed to reach 1% of their funding goals, and only 1 broke 10%. Even worse, one canceled campaign raised over one million dollars on a goal of 5000! That single data point can throw off our analysis by quite a bit. Finally, there are many campaigns (293) with a stated goal of less than 500 dollars, pounds, or Euros, which is largely meaningless when deciding how successful a campaign has been. Speaking of which…

-*Mixed Currencies*

The data has currencies in US dollars, pounds, pesos and Canadian dollars to name a few. The goals and average donated per backer means vastly different things in these contexts! With constantly changing exchange rates to account for it would take a huge job to standardize this data in any meaningful way.

*-Company context*

The organizations requesting these funds can range from single person content creators to teams of 100+. What you seek for your entity should match the general outlook of companies of similar size. But there is no way to filter for this, nor would I suspect Kickstarter even knows! What a playwright should do to fund a script and a theater company to fund a production are vastly different, and there is no way to quickly filter for these considerations.

Further Analysis

That said there still do exist many more useful things we can use the data. Campaign success rate by Kickstarter spotlight and staff picks is particularly interesting as it suggests the company may have greater power to push through campaigns it deems “acceptable”. Further analysis of those projects which were chosen for spotlights can also raise your odds of receiving that particular benefit, greatly increasing your own success.

This data is also a good spot for NLP. Searching blurbs for phrases and words common among successful and unsuccessful campaigns could suggest how one could effectively entice potential donors and, perhaps even more importantly, what might scare them away.

-