Kickstart My Chart

1. Given the provided data, what are three conclusions we can draw about Kickstarter campaigns?

With the exceptions of food, games, and publishing, most Kickstarter categories are more likely to succeed than fail, although we cannot really say anything about journalism, because there were so few campaigns in this category, and all were cancelled. To understand why these particular categories were different, it would be necessary to look at other factors. **Conclusion: Kickstarter is a pretty good way to raise money.**

The subcategory of plays was by far the most active, with more than one thousand campaigns. Of these, approximately two-thirds succeeded and one-third failed. The next most frequent subcategory, rock, had only 260 campaigns, and all succeeded. Several subcategories were complete failures: animation, children’s books, fiction, food trucks, gadgets, jazz, mobile games, nature, people, places, restaurants, translations, video games, and web. No obvious patterns emerge in this list. There were nearly the same number of subcategories in which every campaign succeeded: classical music, documentary, electronic music, hardware, metal, nonfiction, pop, radio & podcasts, rock, shorts, small batch, tabletop games, and television. One thing that stands out in the list of successes is the higher proportion of music-related campaigns compared to the list of failures. This fits the pattern shown in the parent categories, in which music had the highest ratio of success to failure. **Conclusion: music is a better bet.**

April-June was the most active season, with the largest number of campaigns, although there was a second, smaller uptick in October. April-June was also the period with the widest margin between number of successes and number of failures. December was both the least active month and the only month in which failed campaigns exceeded successful ones. Likely this was due to the Christmas holiday season, when people are spending money on holiday shopping and less likely to feel they have money to spare for a Kickstarter donation. **Conclusion: April-June is the best time.**

2. What are some limitations of this dataset?

One glaring limitation is that this data set does not give any indication of why the cancelled campaigns were cancelled. An entire category, journalism, consisted only of cancelled campaigns, and likewise several subcategories, namely, art books, audio, science fiction, and world music. It is interesting to note that, although cancellations varied little through the year, they did have slight upticks in July (at the end of the peak season), and in December (just before the worst season).

Also, by looking at the time data aggregated by months, we may be missing variation between years. How are Kickstarter campaigns affected by upturns and downturns in the overall economy?

The live campaigns suggest that this data was gathered in March of the most recent year. That might or might not skew the data, depending on what month the first year data begins.

3. What are some other possible tables and/or graphs that we could create?

It would be instructive to create a clustered bar graph, in which the subcategories within one given parent category are shown side by side, for easier comparison. Also, one of the above-mentioned limitations could potentially be addressed by overlapping line graphs for separate years, although this could become visually cluttered if there are four separate sets of lines on one graph (actually three, since live campaigns are, presumably, all within the last year of the data).

Another way to look at the data is with pie charts, to examine, for example, the percentage of each type of campaign. One pie chart for successful campaigns, by category or subcategory, another for failed campaigns, by category or subcategory – possibly compared with a third, total campaigns, by category or subcategory. This would help reveal patterns in the proportions of success to failure in the different categories.