



Joel Mott – Flatiron School

# Maximizing ROI for Microsoft Films

# Business Context

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Microsoft is opening a film studio and seeking data on films doing well at the box office.

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This project defines box office success as return on investment (ROI).

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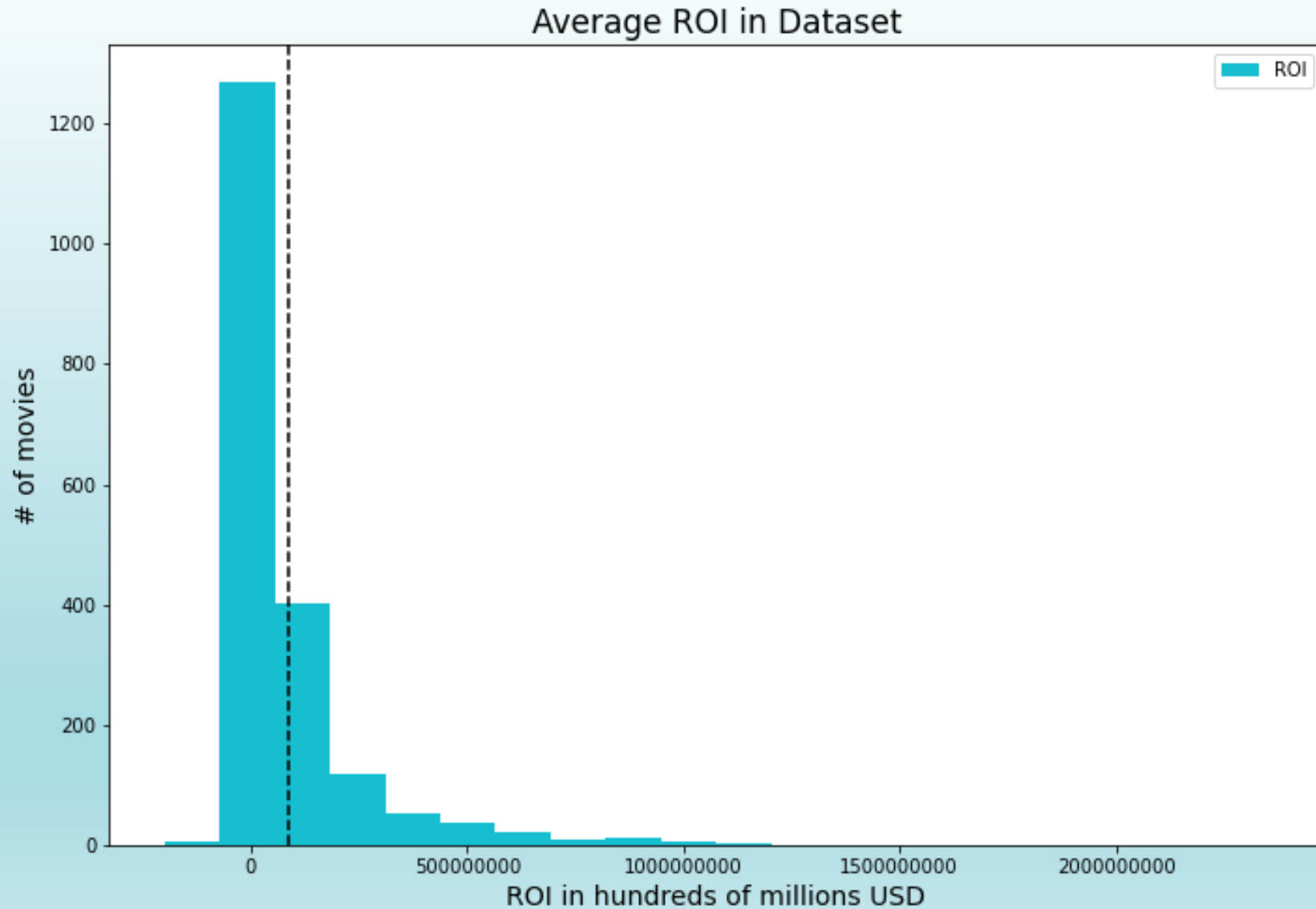
Specifically, ROI is defined here as the amount of money in USD that a film made worldwide, minus its production budget.

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The project analyzes box office data along with **genre**, **month of release**, and **directors** to help Microsoft make informed decisions on producing films more likely to have a robust ROI.

# Data Overview

- This study examines data from 1,949 films with budgets that are not small (general consensus is that small budgets are below \$2 million USD).
- This graph shows the distribution of ROIs in the dataset, with the dashed line showing the average at \$87 million.
- Budget and ROI data was drawn from **the-numbers.com** while genre, month of release, and director information comes from **IMDb**.



# Process Steps

- First, I examined:
  1. when high-ROI films tend to be released
  2. which genres earn higher ROIs
  3. which directors make high-ROI films
- Then I compiled more specific findings:
  1. when high-ROI films in a particular genre tend to be released
  2. which directors within that genre tend to make higher-ROI films

# Results Overview

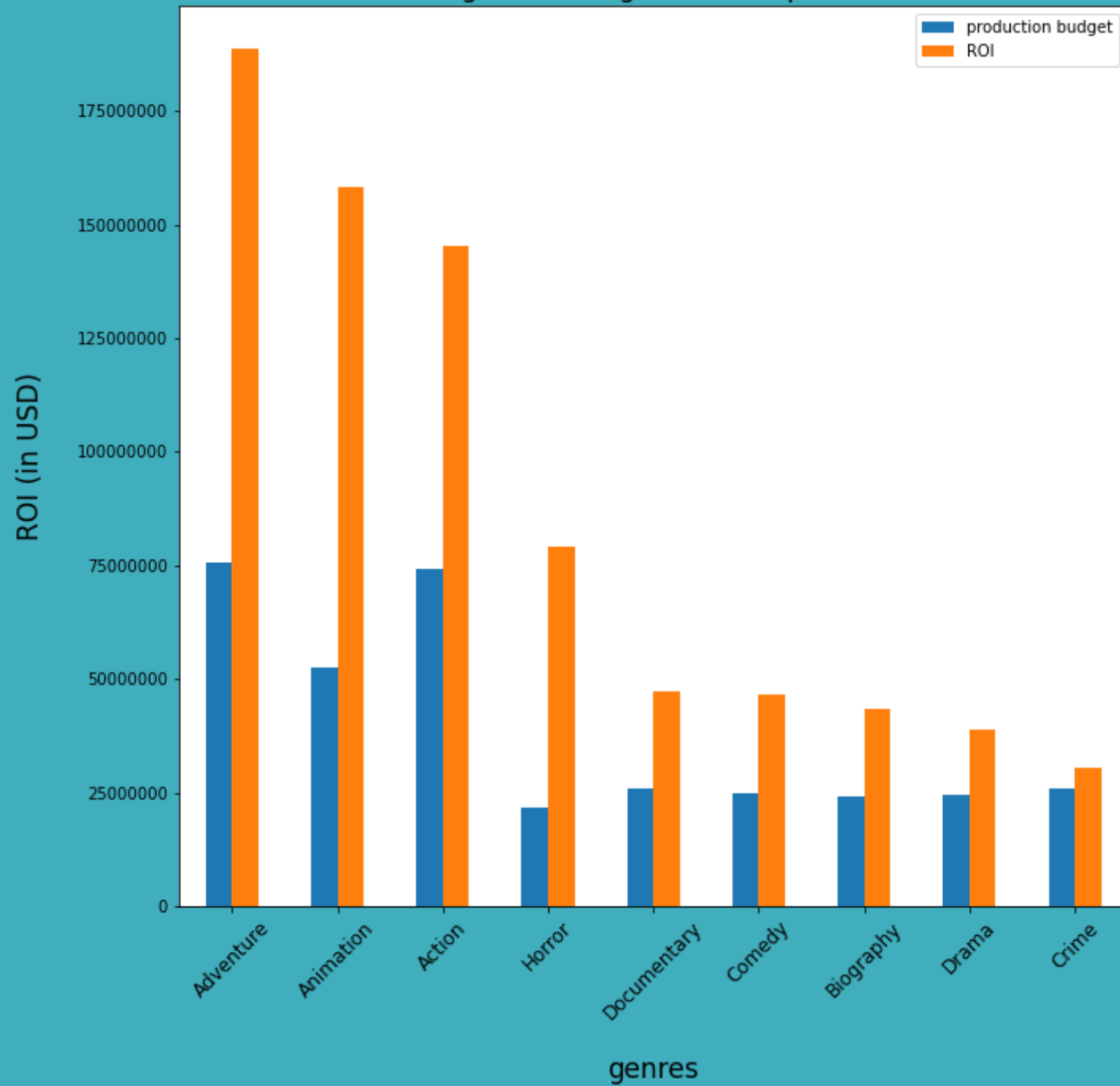
The following film genres tend to return a positive ROI (in order from highest to lowest):

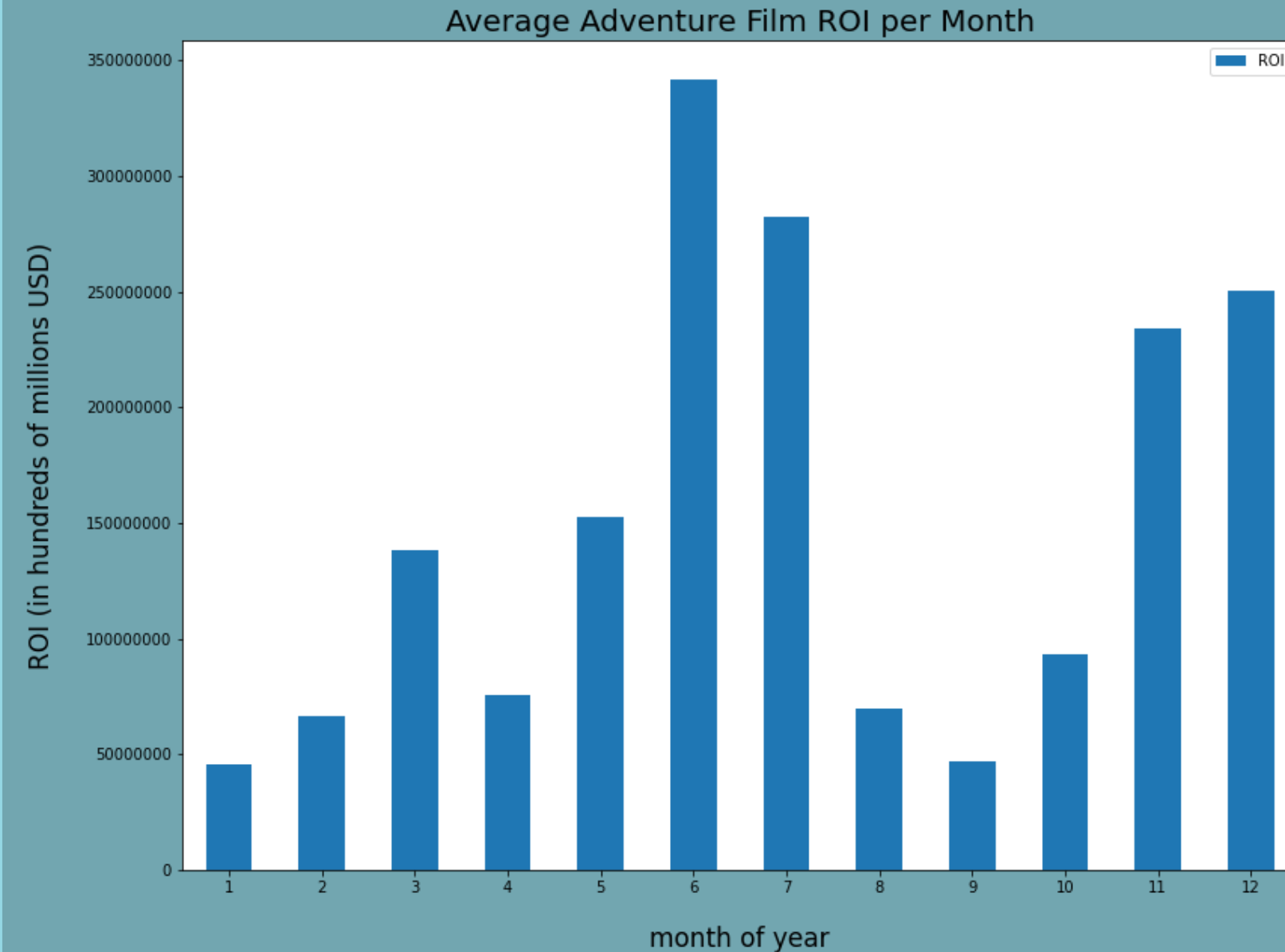
1. adventure
2. animation
3. action
4. horror
5. documentary
6. comedy
7. biography
8. drama
9. crime

The following genres tend not to return a robust ROI (from highest to lowest average ROI):

1. thriller
2. music
3. romance
4. sport

Average Film Budget and ROI per Genre



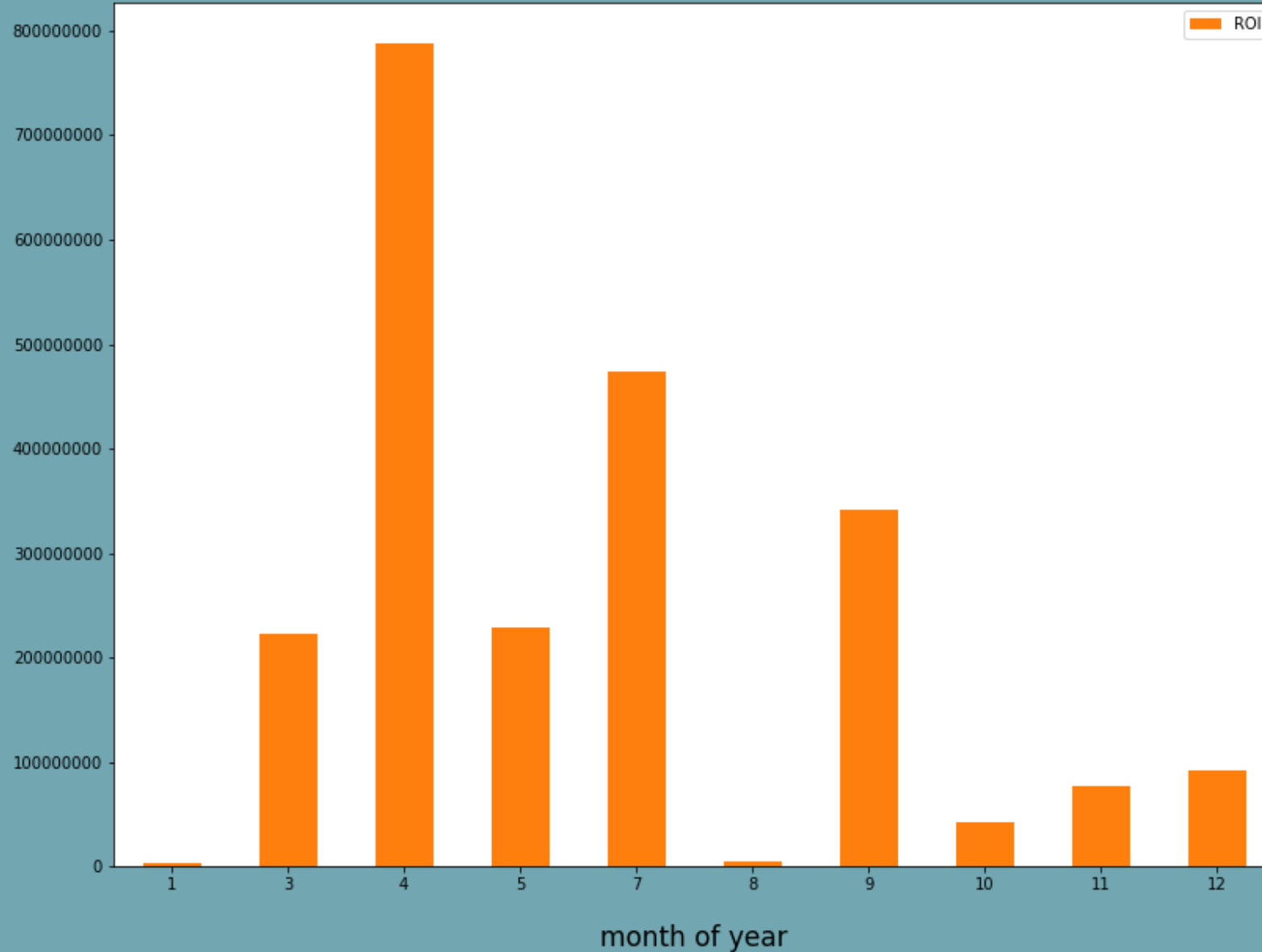


recommended  
adventure film  
release months & top  
ten directors for ROI

1. James Cameron
2. Peter Jackson
3. Kyle Balda
4. Pete Meads
5. Lee Unkrich
6. Byron Howard
7. Adam Green
8. Mike Mitchell
9. David Yates
10. Tim Burton

ROI (in hundreds of millions USD)

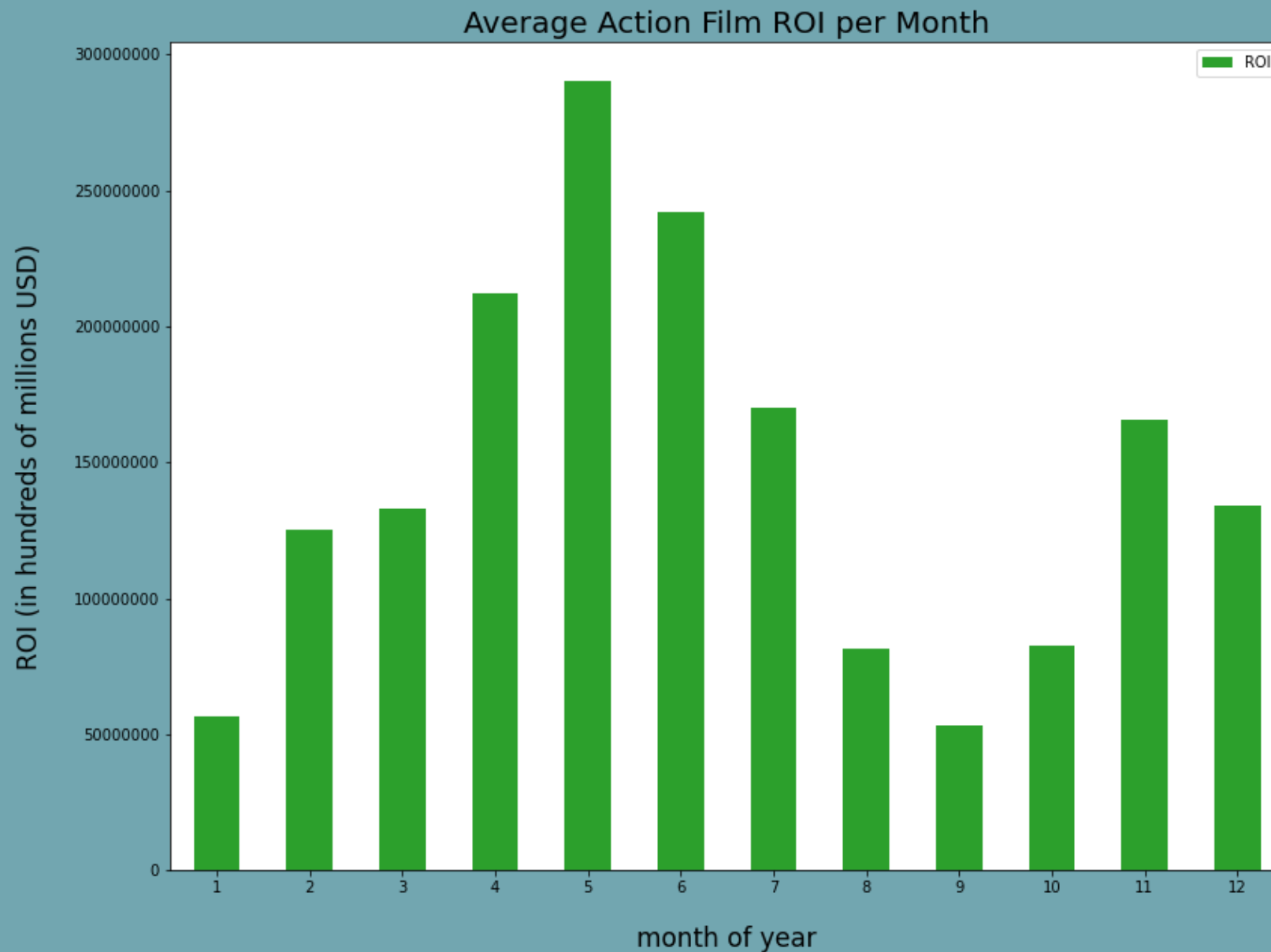
Average Animation Film ROI per Month



recommended  
animation film  
release months & top  
ten directors for ROI

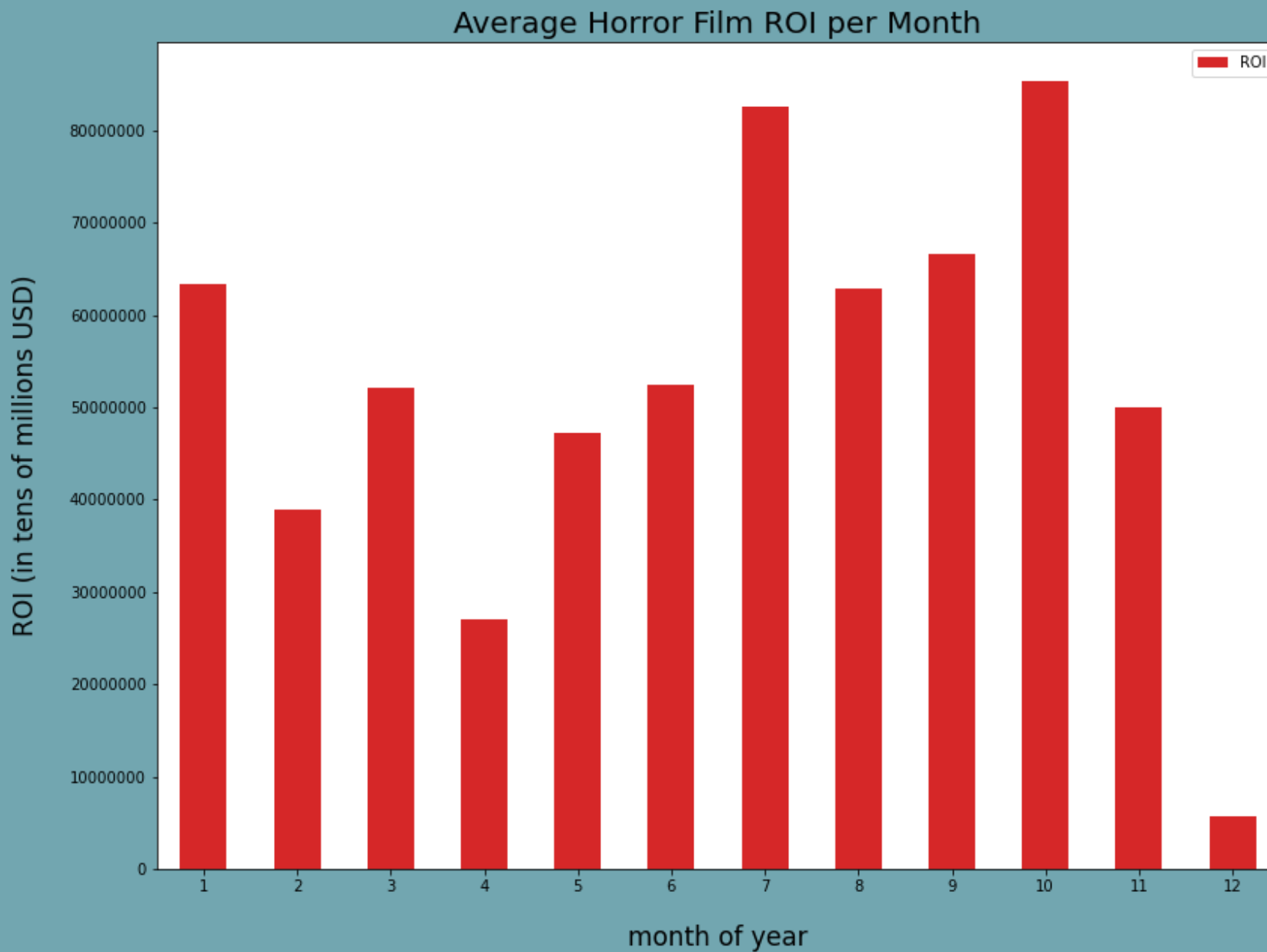
1. Jun Falkenstein
2. Genndy Tartakovsky
3. Garth Jennings
4. Chris Renaud
5. Jason Stamp
6. John Stronach
7. Greg Tiernan
8. Sylvain Chomet
9. Tim Burton
10. Fernando Cortizo





recommended **action**  
film release months &  
top ten directors for ROI

1. Anthony Russo
2. Joss Whedon
3. James Wan
4. Michael Bay
5. Francis Lawrence
6. Christopher Nolan
7. Sam Mendes
8. Zack Snyder
9. Garth Edwards
10. Colin Trevorrow

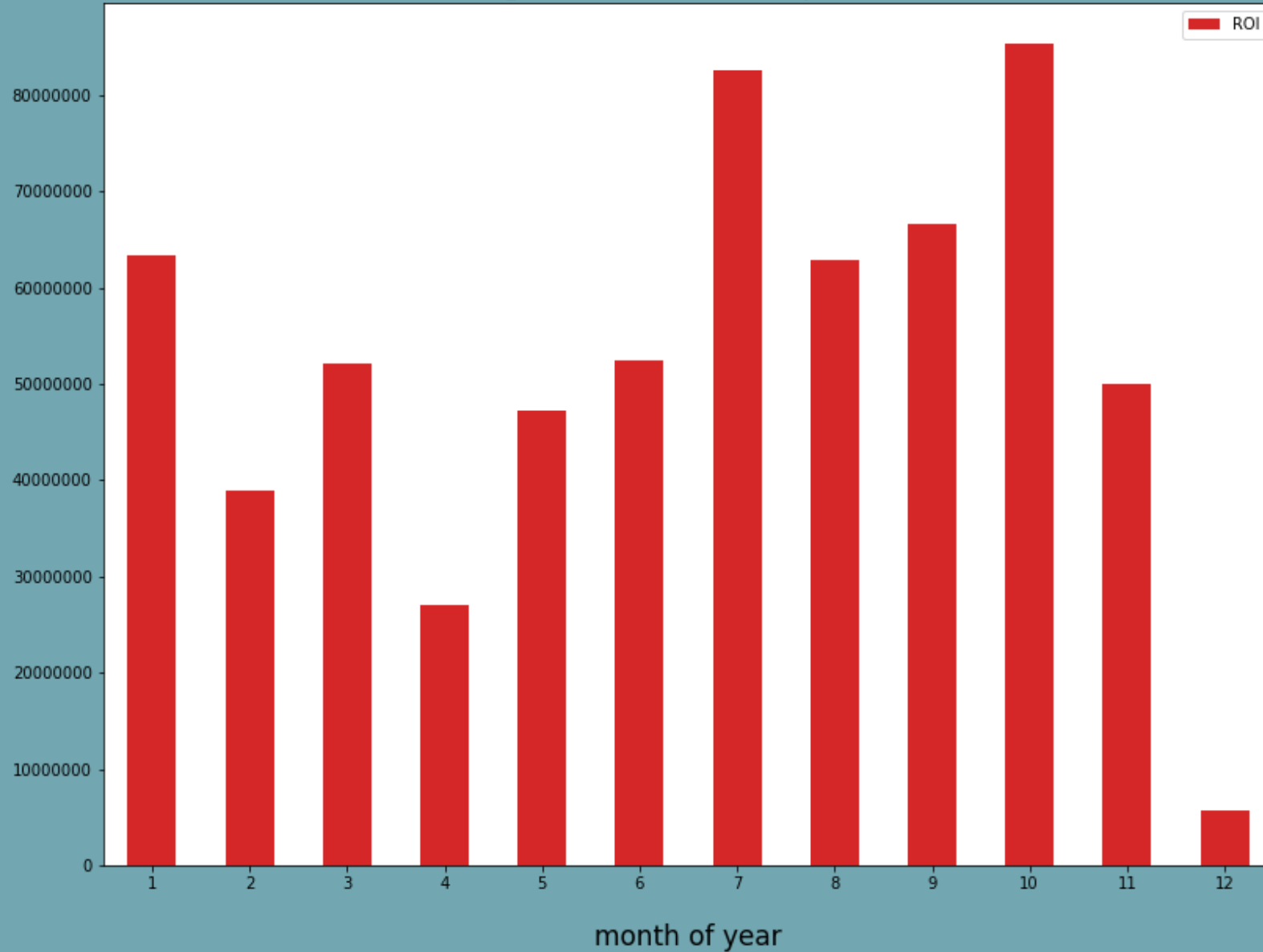


recommended **horror** film  
release months & top ten  
directors for ROI

(Note: from here on, ROI  
values in graphs are now in  
the *tens* of millions)

1. Andy Muschietti
2. Henry Joost
3. David Gordon Green
4. James Wan
5. David F. Sandberg
6. Jordan Peele
7. John R. Leonetti
8. Christopher Landon
9. Tod Williams
10. Gil Kenan

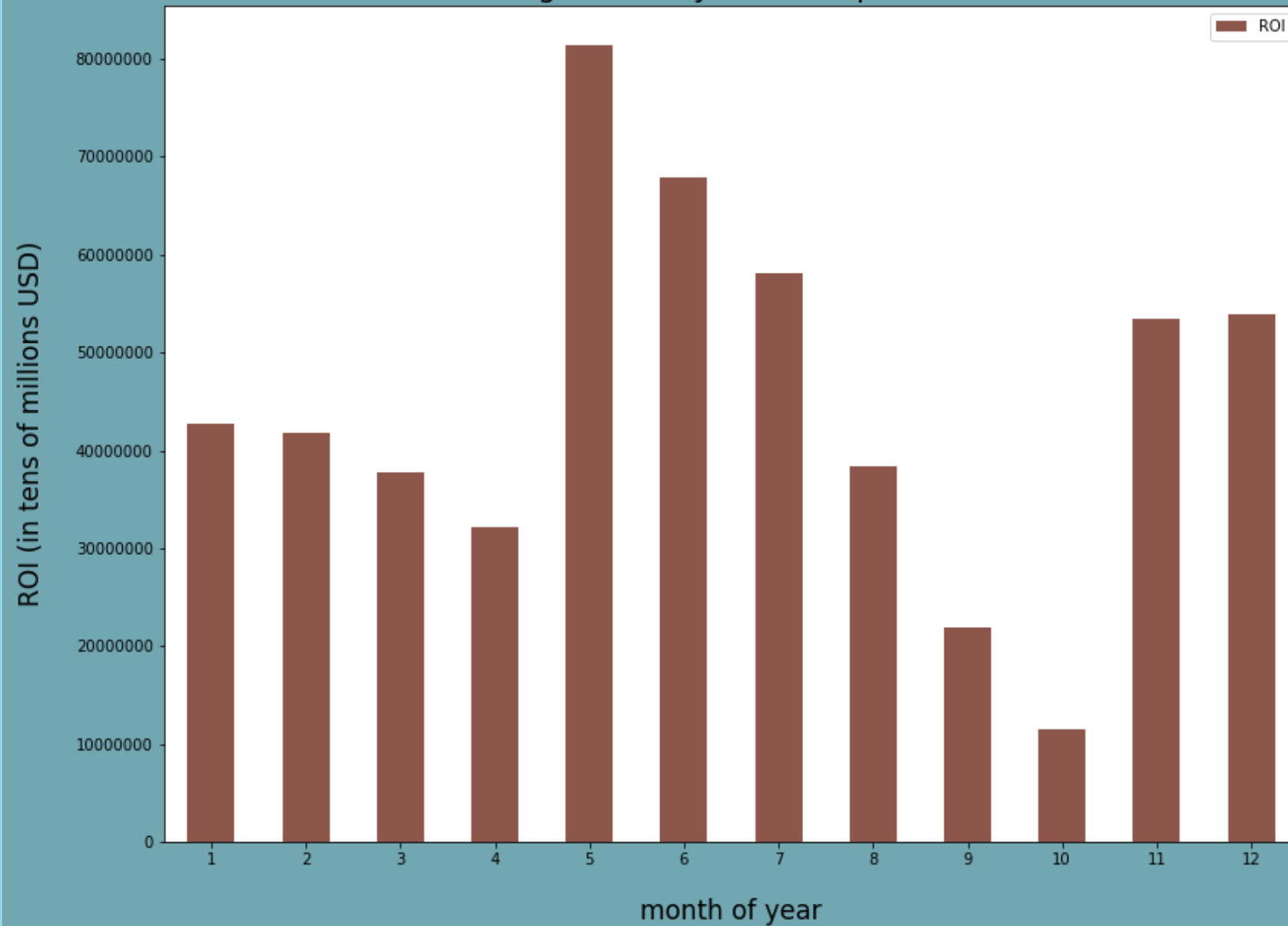
Average Horror Film ROI per Month



recommended  
documentary film  
release months & top  
ten directors for ROI

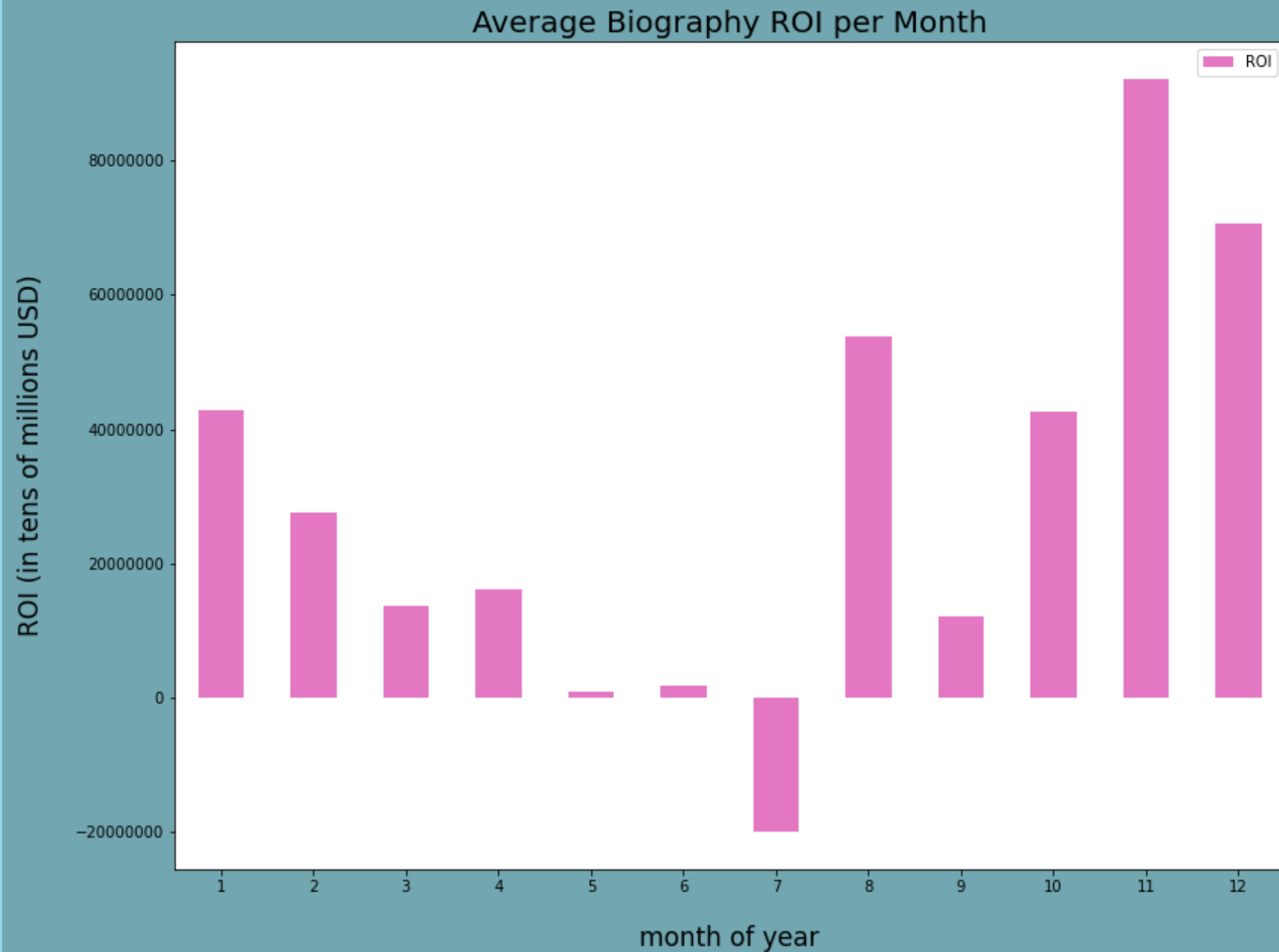
1. Vanja Kovacevic
2. Reza Golchin
3. Laura Clarke
4. Jesse Rose
5. Sjoerd Oostrik
6. Sarah Morris
7. Jill Magid
8. Luciana Kaplan
9. Patrick Fileti
10. Sean Sevestre

Average Comedy Film ROI per Month



recommended **comedy**  
film release months &  
top ten directors for ROI

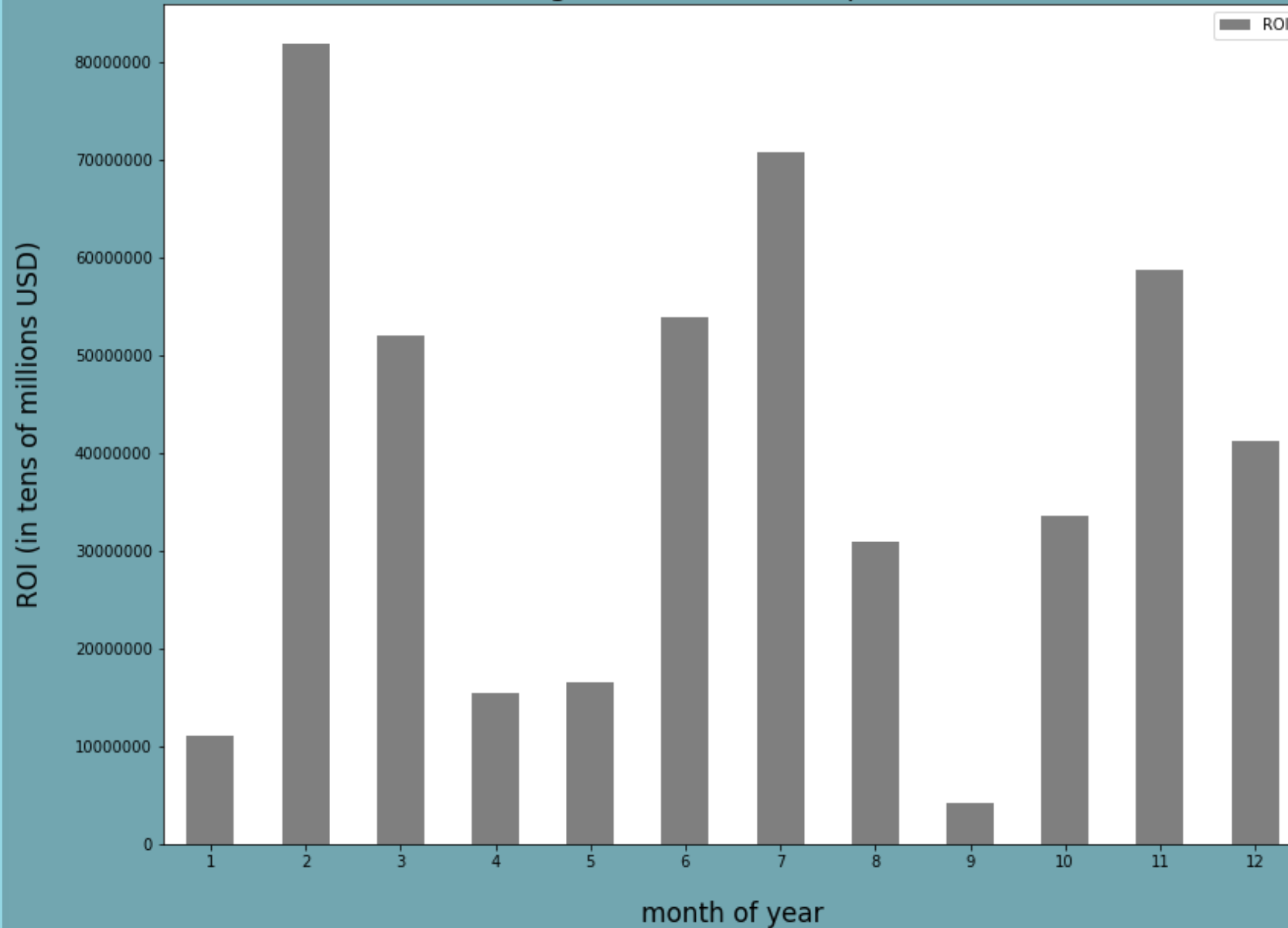
1. Seth MacFarlane
2. Todd Phillips
3. Kyle Lawrence
4. Dennis Dugan
5. Damien Chazelle
6. Rahim Behboodi Far
7. Nicholas Stoller
8. Paul Feig
9. Daming Chen
10. Jake Kasdan



recommended  
biography film release  
months & top ten  
directors for ROI

1. Bryan Singer
2. Steven Spielberg
3. Michael Gracey
4. Peter Farrelly
5. Martin Scorsese
6. Clint Eastwood
7. Morten Tyldum
8. Theodore Melfi
9. David Fincher
10. Ben Affleck

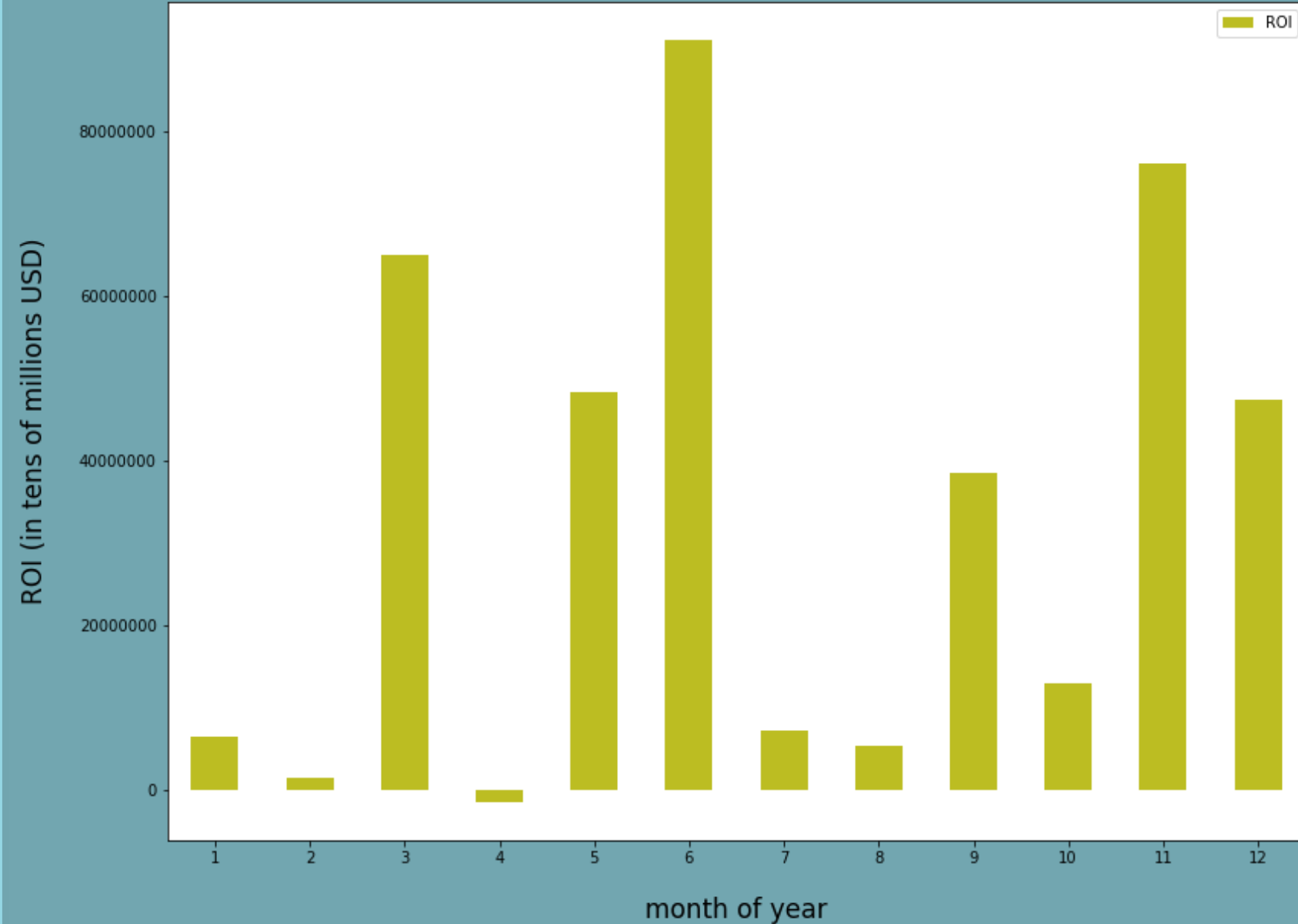
Average Drama Film ROI per Month



recommended drama  
film release months &  
top ten directors for ROI

1. Christophe Gans
2. James Foley
3. Alfonso Cuarón
4. Sam Taylor-Johnson
5. Tarô Ohtani
6. Chris Eneaji Eneng
7. Quentin Tarantino
8. Darren Aronofsky
9. Sébastien Grall
10. David Fincher

Average Crime Film ROI per Month



recommended **crime**  
film release months &  
top ten directors for ROI

1. Artie Mandelberg
2. Mostafa Kiayee
3. Kenneth Branagh
4. Louis Leterrier
5. David O. Russell
6. David Fincher
7. Martin McDonagh
8. Ben Affleck
9. Waylon Jennings
10. Quentin Tarantino

# summary

- While each of these genres average a positive ROI, the following three stand out with the highest earning potential:
  - an **adventure** film released in June
  - an **animation** film released in April
  - an **action** film released in May
- Furthermore, Microsoft may be able to maximize ROI by recruiting one of the respective top ten ROI-earning directors listed next to each genre's graph.



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