Kickstarter Campaign Analysis: Keys to Successful Projects

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The mission of this project was to identify certain factors that lend Kickstarter campaigns to be successful - or failures - by analyzing data from over 4,000 campaigns in Excel.

Using pivot tables, statistical formulas and graphic charts, I was able to make a number of conclusions summarized here.

Success factors

1. **Not all categories are created equal.** A pivot table analysis shows that certain categories are clearly more popular (Film & Video, Music and Theater), but are more likely to succeed. Categories like Food, Games, Journalism and Publishing have are much less likely to succeed based on historical experience.

2. **Subcategory matters too.** That said, all categories are worth analyzing in more detail. Examples:

    a. **Technology:** at first glance ,Technology looks like a difficult category to achieve success with. However, drilling down to its subcategories reveals that Hardware is an extremely successful subcategory, with an astounding 140 successful projects at a 100% success rate. The data isn't sufficient to determine why that is the case. But it is clear that all other technology subcategories like websites seem doomed from the start.

    b. **Film & Video:** In contrast, this category looks like a successful one overall. However, looking at subcategories reveals that Animation and Drama have 100% failure rates, while Documentaries have a 100% success rate. Drilling down even farther, there's another interesting observation: Documentary projects have an average goal of $21,000; Animation and Drama projects have much more ambition fundraising goals, at $130,000 and $214,000 respectively. A possible hypothesis is that goal amount is a more influential factor in success than the subcategory itself, and some subcategories tend to demand much larger budgets.

3. **Careful when you launch!** Projects launched between January and August enjoy a noticeably higher success than projects that are launched in the fall. Based on the data, I would recommend that project owners postpone their launch until January if they can't launch by August.

4. **Goal amounts:** There is an interesting phenomenon with goal amounts. More modest goals clearly enjoy a higher rate of success, meaning amounts up to about $15,000. This is evident even comparing success rates of subcategories (See Film & Video above). From $15,000 to $35,000, campaigns are more likely to fail then succeed. From $35,000 to $45,000 there is another range of relative success. It would be interesting to explore range more deeply. Beyond $45,000, it is clear that campaign failure rates rise rapidly.

5. **Focus on volume of backers:** Successful campaigns have an average of 194 backers, versus failed campaigns at 18. There is a wide variance of backers for successful projects, so the number of backers is not the only indicator of success – but it certainly a critical success factor. The wide variance can be explained by the much large volumes of backers.

Limitations

1. The data has numerous outliers. This analysis did not attempt to remove outliers, which would be a logical next step.
2. There is no feedback from campaign owners. It would be interesting to have "exit survey" data to compare their perceptions with results.

Next steps

1. Clean the data of outliers and other anomalies will make all conclusions more reliable.
2. As mentioned above, much further analysis can be done drilling down into the subcategories.
3. Analysis by country may reveal trends that are particular to geographic factors.