

STORY CREATION

Skwad is a teenage focused movie. I chose this genre for my first movie as teenage movies are easy to create and can be produced for around \$15m. That limits the movie's audience to teenagers and adults. While this is not the widest possible audience for the movie, it is the best audience for a low budget movie. There are examples of movies in this genre that have been made for around \$15m that have earned over \$700m in the worldwide box office. [The story information below is © 2018 by Steve Jasmine.]

Comparable Movies

As Skwad is targeted to teenagers I have used Grease as the most relevant billion dollar grossing movie for this genre. I have studied Grease in detail, assessing its story structure, its characters, its filming style, its locations, its casting and its story elements. This has been done to help Skwad achieve the same box office outcome as Grease.

I have studied several low budget, high profit movies, that focus on the key elements of Grease, which are romance, action, comedy and drama. These movies are Rocky, Pretty Woman, American Graffiti, Animal House and American Pie. My focus has been mostly on Grease, with these other movies adding smaller elements to the story.

I have analyzed the Twilight Saga franchise and the Hunger Games franchise as the most recent examples of teenage focused movies that were successful in the box office. While these movies had higher budgets than the movie I have written, they have key story elements that don't cost a lot of money to create. Both movie franchises successfully combined a heavy romance theme with an action theme, and both focused on a love triangle situation between two boys and one girl.

A financier can assess the box office potential of Skwad by comparing its story to the stories of the other highly profitable movies that it is based on. Following here is a basic comparison with these movies. The areas of creative similarity between Skwad and these movies is more substantial than the comparisons given here. As there are 1,300 factors in my model, it would take hundreds of pages to fully show the comparison.

Inflation Adjustment

The budget and revenue numbers are given here for each movie discussed. They have been adjusted for inflation to January 2018 values. These numbers allow for a financier to see the potential revenue available from a movie with a similar story. For several of these movies that revenue was generated with a similar production budget to Skwad.

Grease - 1978

Budget: \$24m, Revenue: \$1,583m

Grease is a billion dollar grossing movie. It's revenue is about the same as that of Marvel's The Avengers in today's terms. That revenue was made when there were fewer movie theaters, there was no premium for 3D movies and the international market for movies was smaller. Grease was therefore more successful than Marvel's The Avengers, yet Grease had 1/10th of the budget of Marvel's The Avengers (adjusted for inflation).

Studying the story of Grease in detail reveals the reason for its amazing box office success. Grease is actually three movie stories in one. There is a male hero focused story and a female hero focused story. These two stories run in parallel throughout the movie. Grease also has a third story, which is a battle between the sexes. In this third story the female hero is fighting against the male hero for control of her virginity.

In most movies there is one hero and one villain. In Grease the boys have a hero in Danny, and the girls have a hero in Sandy. Danny is fighting against an older male called Leo who is in a rival gang. Sandy is fighting against Cha Cha, who is an older woman that wants to be with Danny. Sandy is also fighting against Danny, who won her heart, then broke it.

Having two heroes and three conflicts shows that the writers of the musical that the movie is based on understood the difference between female and male audiences. Grease is an action movie, a romance movie and a coming of age movie combined into one. That is why Grease was so successful. Its billion dollar box office result is not a random outcome when the story structure of Grease is fully understood.

In Skwad there are four teams: the female hero called Tori and her team of friends; the male hero called Cody and his group of friends; the female villain called Chancy and her team of friends; the male villain called Eric and his group of friends.

Tori and Chancy are fighting each other in a battle to be with Cody, the coolest and sexiest guy in high school. Tori does not intend to be in this battle. It is something that she finds herself in because Cody is interested in her. This gives Chancy a reason to hate Tori, which causes the conflict between these two female characters.

Cody and Eric are fighting each other in a battle to see who is the best quarterback in high school football in the USA. Cody used to be the best quarterback but he quit football to focus on parties and girls. This choice allowed Eric to become the best quarterback. Eric is not satisfied with this. He wants to beat Cody in a football match to prove to everyone that he is the best high school quarterback in the USA. This causes the conflict between these two male characters.

Like Grease, Skwad has a battle between the sexes at the heart of its story structure. This third battle is created by Cody and Tori falling in love. Cody rejects his love for Tori because he has been told his whole teenage life to be a single guy who has sex with lots of good looking women. He needs to leave that behind to find true love with Tori.

Tori is afraid of her feelings for Cody because she does not believe that she is worthy of his love. She is a shy quiet girl who grew up in China and he is the most popular boy in school. She does not believe that he loves her and assumes that he just wants her as one of his many conquests. Complicating this situation is an interest in Tori from another boy called Val. Complicating this situation, the female villain Chancy and the male hero Cody are secretly sleeping together, while Chancy is also dating the male villain Eric.

Both Tori and Cody must defeat their external villains and the fear of failure that lives inside of themselves in order to be together. Skwad is a romance story, an action story, a comedy, and a drama, within a coming of age story. The story structure of Skwad creates three movies in one, as happened in Grease. Skwad teaches teenagers to be true to their hearts rather than try to fit into the social rules of their high school society. This is the same message that Grease taught its audiences 40 years ago. It is a worthwhile life lesson for teenagers and adults that can create a billion dollar box office result.

Rocky - 1978

Budget: \$4m, Revenue: \$1,016m

Rocky is a movie about a person with heart and courage who has to overcome their own low opinion of themselves to succeed. Rocky is also about a man finding true love with a woman that other men have overlooked, because she is considered ordinary. Through his love for her she develops into a more confident woman. Rocky is a romance movie and an action movie, which appeals to both male and female audiences.

The dual nature of Rocky creates the ability for male and female audiences to enjoy the movie, independently and together as a couple. This duality in the story increased the box office revenues of Rocky. Avatar and Titanic similarly combine action and romance to appeal to a large audience to achieve their multi billion dollar box office revenues.

Skwad has a male action focused story based around fast cars and high school football. It also has a romance story about a girl with low self esteem who becomes a woman, finds true love and becomes a successful musical artist. The action and romance themes are intertwined throughout the movie, appealing to male and female teenagers. Since these themes also interest adults, Skwad will appeal to an adult audience. A broad appeal through basic themes is a key to movies earning over a billion dollars in the box office.

Pretty Woman - 1990

Budget: \$27m, Revenue: \$908m

Pretty Woman is a movie about a woman with low self esteem who turns a rich, money focused man into a loving husband. This is similar to the romance story in Skwad where a young girl who grew up in China has to value herself in order to earn the love of the super rich and good looking high school playboy.

In Pretty Woman the male character Edward is excessively rich but his business does not build anything meaningful. He gives up his focus on money due to his love for the female character Vivian, thus becoming a better man. Love causes him to revalue his whole life's purpose. That is the core theme in billion dollar grossing movies. The box office outcome of Pretty Woman is therefore predictable given my understanding of movie popularity.

The theme of Pretty Woman is that love causes people to value themselves and to seek meaning in their life. This is the theme in Skwad where the male and female heroes have not been using their talents to create an amazing life. Rather they have been too scared to take the risks needed to become someone greater than they already are.

In Skwad the male hero Cody has no focus in his life, despite being a highly talented quarterback. He played high school football but decided that going to practice was too much hard work, and not much fun due to the coach always yelling at him. So Cody quit the team. The female hero Tori has a natural talent as an amazing singer and song writer. Her fear of publicity causes her to hide her talent from the world. Therefore she only sings her songs at home when she is alone.

When Cody and Tori finally accept their love for each other they change and become better people. Cody becomes a football star and Tori becomes a famous singer. This mirrors the character evolution in Pretty Woman where Vivian decides to stop being a prostitute, and Edward decides to own and manage a business making Navy ships.

American Graffiti - 1973

Budget: \$4m, Revenue: \$812m

American Graffiti is about the excitement and dangers of USA teenage car culture. The movie is about the freedom that owning a car gives to a teenager. The time of the movie is just before teenagers leave their home town to go to college. This is key to the movie's amazing box office success as this is one of the most complex times in a person's life. The choice of which college they go to and what they study will impact the rest of their lives.

The lesson of the movie is about the male hero making the choice to follow his career path, leaving the safety of his home town to lead a more adventurous life. His best friend chooses to remain in their small town. At the end the audience are shown that the best friend lived a less interesting life, by making that choice to remain in their small town.

In Skwad the teenagers also approach the end of high school, when their choices will affect the rest of their lives. Cody chooses to marry Tori and become a famous football player. Tori chooses to marry Cody and become a famous singer.

Skwad focuses on cars as the symbol of teenage freedom. As all the teenagers in Skwad are from wealthy families they have amazing, unusual and expensive cars. These cars add to the visual quality of Skwad, helping to give it an "event movie" status.

Animal House - 1978

Budget: \$11m, Revenue: \$962m

Animal House is about an innocent young man who loses his virginity with the help of experienced college friends. Following their example he avoids the socially defined path to success. This results in him leading a more enjoyable and interesting life.

Animal House shows the audience that people who follow the defined path in life do not always succeed and do not always find happiness. It shows that people who question the social norms and fight against authority can achieve great career outcomes. The lessons of Animal House are the lessons of all billion dollar grossing movies. The amazing box office success of Animal House is therefore highly predictable.

In Skwad the innocent female hero Tori is guided in both love and her career by her more experienced friends who do not conform to the peer group pressure that most teenagers feel. These friends tell her to release her belief that study and hard work will lead to happiness. They tell her to follow her heart which is telling her to be a singer and to be in love with Cody. The movie is about teenagers taking risks to have the life that they always dreamed of having, rather than playing it safe and having a less interesting life.

Tori's parents represent the life that she will have if she does not follow her heart. They are wealthy and relatively happy with each other, but their day to day lives do not inspire them. This is because they settled for the safe road in life. The male hero Cody faces the same issues as Tori, but in a slightly different way. He has to choose between the safety of working in his family's enormously financially successful but boring business or pursuing his childhood dream of playing professional football. He has to choose between living an easy yet meaningless life, or living a difficult but meaningful life.

American Pie - 1999

Budget: \$16m, Revenue: \$350m

American Pie is about high school boys who seek to lose their virginity to anyone. It is also about high school girls who seek to have sex with the boy that they are in love with. It is about the battle of the sexes. This battle is a major theme in Skwad.

American Pie shows different high school relationships and shows how each can lead to sex and love. The outcomes for the characters are not what they expect, both in terms of how they end up having sex, and who they end up being in love with. The boy who is looking for easy sex falls in love. The boy who is in a stable relationship ends up single. The boy who is too mature for high school, but wants high school girls, ends up with an older woman. The boy who takes a nerdy girl to his prom finds out that she is a sexually active woman who has planned to take his virginity.

When the story of American Pie is analyzed it reveals that each character ends up with someone who complements their true self, not the false self that they are presenting to their high school peers. American Pie gives the audience a message that being true to yourself leads to sex and to love. The male characters were not having sex or finding love because they were trying to be with someone who was the opposite of their true self. Only when they embraced who they truly are did they succeed in their goals.

In Skwad each character ends the movie in a relationship that is vastly different to the one they expected to be in. The story of Skwad shows the teenage audience that they cannot predict how life will turn out. It tells them that if they are true to themselves then they will find love and happiness. That is a valuable and worthwhile life lesson.

Twilight - 2008

Budget: \$44m, Revenue: \$461m

The Twilight movies are five teenage focused action romance movies. The franchise starts with a movie with a strong romance element and a lesser action element. As the movies progress through the franchise the action element increases relative to the romance element until they are almost equal in their significance.

When the mix between romance and action in these movies became more balanced, the box office of the movies increased from \$461m to over \$700m per movie. This increase in in the action element encouraged teenagers and women to take their boyfriends or their husbands to see the Twilight movies, and fathers to take their daughters to the movies.

The romance theme in the first Twilight movie is about an ordinary high school girl called Bella who loves an amazing high school boy called Edward. For some reason that Bella does not understand, Edward is interested in her. Bella doesn't believe that this amazing boy could love her, and therefore she rejects his love.

Edward fears loving Bella because his family do not want him to be in a relationship with Bella, as he is a vampire. Edward tries everything to not love Bella but he is unsuccessful. Their love for each other overpowers their personal fears.

Bella finally accepts that Edward truly loves her while Edward embraces the complexity of them being together. Added to this romance is the start of a love triangle between Bella and another amazing high school boy called Jacob. This boy happens to be a werewolf, which makes him the enemy of Edward. The need for Bella to resolve that love triangle becomes the cornerstone of the stories of the next four Twilight movies.

Throughout the Twilight movies Bella discovers that she is not as ordinary as she thought. Eventually she embraces her amazing inner powers. This explains why both Edward and Jacob were interested in her. The Twilight franchise sends the message to the teenage audience that people don't always realize how amazing they are. That is an important lesson for teenagers to learn. It is a lesson that has real value in their everyday lives.

In Skwad there is an ordinary girl called Tori who is in love with an amazing boy called Cody. He cannot be with her because of social pressures telling him to be single. Tori does not believe that Cody could love her because she believes that she is ordinary. Eventually Tori embraces her inner power and she accepts that Cody loves her. Cody finally releases himself from his peer group pressure and embraces his love for Tori.

The love triangle theme in the Twilight movies helped those five movies generate \$3.5 billion in the box office. In Skwad there is a love triangle element between Tori, Cody, and another amazing boy called Val, who also likes Tori. Cody is Edward while Val is Jacob.

Similar to the Twilight movies, the choice for Tori of who she really wants to be with is clear to her in her heart, which is Cody. Yet the interest of the other boy Val confuses her. This is because Val shows far more interest in Tori than Cody does. This interest from Val puts Tori in a situation of emotional conflict caused by this love triangle.

Bella's emotional conflict in the Twilight movies, created by her love triangle, helped the later Twilight movies each earn over \$700m in revenue. This is because a love triangle is a powerful yet simple emotional conflict for teenagers to understand, which helps in the marketing of the movie. All billion dollar grossing movies put their heroes in multiple situations of emotional conflict. In Skwad there are many emotional conflicts for the major characters, and Tori's love triangle is just one of those many emotional conflicts.

Hunger Games - 2012

Budget: \$84m, Revenue: \$747m

The Hunger Games is a teenage focused movie franchise with a good balance between romance and action. Unlike the Twilight movies, the female hero is a physically talented character, rather than an ordinary girl. Otherwise, the Hunger Games movies are very similar to the Twilight movies in terms of their story elements, despite appearing to be very different. My research clearly highlights these story similarities.

The underlying story similarities between the Hunger Games movies and the Twilight movies results in their similar box office outcomes. Both movie franchises earned around \$700m a movie, as both franchises appealed in the same way to the same audience.

There is a love triangle theme running through the Hunger Games movies, with two boys in love with one girl. As happens in Twilight, the girl hero knows which one of the two boys she truly loves, but is conflicted as the other boy works hard for her attention.

A love triangle theme is interesting to teenage audiences and appears in all the highly profitable teenage movies. This is because the choice of life partner is one of the most significant biological events a person deals with. Human beings are preprogrammed by nature to deal with this life partner issue when puberty starts. Any teenage focused movie that deals with this theme has a better likelihood of being financially successful.

The movie Grease has a love triangle. Sandy is in love with the car focused Danny, yet he rejects her love by "playing cool". Then Sandy dates the football focused Tom. That makes Danny jealous which causes him to realize that he is in love with Sandy. Danny then joins the athletics squad to win Sandy back. Danny falls while running the hurdles and Sandy runs from Tom to the fallen Danny. This spontaneous action tells Sandy that she is still in love with Danny and not with Tom. That helps bring Danny and Sandy back together.

In Skwad there is a love triangle for Tori, the female hero. There is also a love triangle for Cody, the male hero. He has to pick between the ordinary Tori, who he is in love with, and the beautiful Chancy, who he does not love. Chancy wants to be with Cody. Tori rejects Cody's interest in her. Cody finally realizes that love is more important than looks. This is a lesson that many teenagers have to learn - to be with the person they have a true connection with instead of the good looking or popular person.

Skwad has a balanced blend of action and romance, with a love triangle theme. This makes the underlying story of Skwad similar to the Hunger Games and the Twilight movie stories. These are the two most financially successful teenage focused movie franchises of recent years, so they are good to use as a story guide for Skwad.

SYNOPSIS AND SCREENPLAY

The synopsis for Skwad is available only to financiers who are at the final stage of deciding to finance the movie. The screenplay is available only to a financier after they have made the payments that commence their financing of the creation of Skwad. This lack of early availability of the screenplay and synopsis is because these documents can be easily copied in a way that could affect my ability to create this movie.

As a movie profitability consultant I have been shown many screenplays by finance brokers looking for an opinion about their movie's potential profitability. While these screenplays were protected by a confidentiality clause, I was never asked to sign a Non Disclosure Agreement (NDA) when viewing them. They were just sent to me to review. I know that a screenplay will move around Hollywood to a large number of unknown people, despite any NDA, once someone has an electronic copy of it.

In a possible scenario, a financier is interested in this movie, but they want to have a second opinion. In this scenario they have the screenplay and they send it to a Hollywood producer to get that second opinion. Unknown to the financier, this is an unscrupulous producer who sees economic potential in my screenplay. They look at my website and realize that my screenplay could make them hundreds of millions of dollars in profits. They tell the financier that any movie based on my screenplay will fail in the box office. I hear back from the financier that they are not interested in this financing opportunity. I am not aware that an unscrupulous Hollywood producer has a copy of my screenplay.

The unscrupulous producer hires a screenwriter to change the names, the basic character descriptions and the physical locations in my screenplay. They take this screenplay (with the detailed production budget that I have created) to a studio that they have a working relationship with. The studio agrees to finance their movie and it is put into production.

While I am financing my movie with another financier, this other movie is released in the theaters and I realize that it is based on my screenplay. I contact the studio and tell them this fact but they are skeptical as they are unaware of how this could have happened. They approach the unscrupulous producer who says they know nothing about my movie. Their screenwriter corroborates their story and says that they have no idea how this happened.

I sue the studio and the producer, which takes several years and costs me hundreds of thousands of dollars. I win the case but I am only awarded a screenwriter's fee of half a million dollars (as they only stole my screenplay, not a finished movie). Instead of creating Skwad, and making a few hundred million dollars in profits, I have half a million dollars after years of fighting in court. I am avoiding this hypothetical scenario by the synopsis only being available to a financier at the final stage of deciding to finance Skwad; and the screenplay only available to the financier when they have financed the movie.