

ARTICLE SUMMARIES

Week 1, September 2025

[The Seasons of Fundraising](#)

Fundraising success is shaped by vision, technology, founder reputation—and crucially, the timing and market "rhythms" of venture capital. While deals happen year-round, there are distinct fundraising seasons, each with its own patterns and advantages.

Fundraising Seasons:

- Best windows: January–Spring Break, and Labor Day–Thanksgiving ("hot seasons" when decisions move quickly).
- Summer sees slower progress due to vacations, but also less competition for attention.
- Holiday weeks are generally dead for fundraising.



Leverage Timing and Speed:

- Fundraise in person during active seasons to maximize serendipitous meetings and create momentum.
- Strive to move fast: urgency signals competitiveness and keeps investors engaged.
- Plan thoroughly in quiet months so you can launch quickly and impressively when the market heats up.
- If your process drags, it's better to pause, improve your metrics, and try again next season rather than risk "stale" perception.

Build a Structured Funnel:

- Target the right investors and partners, using strong introductions to drive interest.
- Synchronize your process so multiple term sheet offers are possible at once, letting competitive dynamics take over.

Know Each Fund's "Magic Numbers":

- Understand target ownership and check size for different funds—seed funds want 10–30%, Series A 15–25%, Series B+ may take less but want big opportunities.
- Pitch deals that fit VCs' models, increasing your odds of success.

Timing, preparation, and speed are levers founders can use to tilt fundraising odds. Treat seasonality as a strategic tool: work the details, build momentum, and plan ahead to maximize success in the VC cycle.

Read the Full Article [here](#).

[The future of CRE operations: Smart building trends to watch in 2025](#)

Commercial real estate is rapidly shifting from manual oversight to data-driven, automated environments. In 2025, technologies like edge computing and machine learning are becoming industry standards, making buildings more efficient, resilient, and responsive to both operators and tenants.



- **Edge Computing:** Building systems process data onsite, enabling real-time adjustments to conditions and immediate maintenance alerts. This approach improves responsiveness and strengthens cybersecurity by keeping sensitive data in-house.
- **Machine Learning:** AI learns a building's unique patterns, flags subtle equipment issues, and optimizes schedules for utilities, reducing downtime and cutting costs. These systems adapt dynamically as occupancy and behaviors change.
- **Regulations & Compliance:** Stricter energy and emissions rules are driving smarter systems. Automated dashboards and reports streamline compliance, helping operators improve sustainability and cut operational costs.
- **Enhanced Tenant Experience:** Smart buildings deliver personalized comfort—preferred temperatures, easy room location, and automated fine-tuning—making spaces more attractive and user-friendly.
- **Cybersecurity:** Growing connectivity raises risks. Operators deploy robust encryption and “zero trust” networks to safeguard tenant data and building functions.
- **System Integration:** Modern protocols tear down old silos, allowing HVAC, lighting, and security to work together and provide holistic, actionable building insights without massive upgrades.
- **Predictive Maintenance:** Sensors detect early signs of equipment issues, preventing breakdowns and extending system lifespans—reducing both costs and tenant disruption.
- **Operational Resilience:** Automated systems enhance emergency response, manage electricity, and enable continuity through microgrids and on-site storage during outages or adverse events.
- **Human-Centric Design:** Smart tech operates invisibly in the background, prioritizing comfort, safety, and practical efficiency for building occupants.

In the evolving landscape of 2025, the smartest buildings prioritize streamlined operations, energy savings, and user experience—enabled by integrated data and adaptive automation, not just flashy dashboards. Facilities that embrace these trends will be well-equipped for whatever challenges arise.

Read the Full Article [here](#).

Reports of the Crowd's Wisdom Have Been Greatly Exaggerated

"So many firms are like, 'Let's build a data lake so we can use AI.' And I'm like, 'What are you going to do then? What?'

Like, are we building things that people will use, or are they aspirationally thinking they're going to get value?

Because, Jen, if I'm being totally honest, I see all this extensive work and tons of money to clean up data and normalize it and get it in this data lake. And then they're like, 'What happens now?'

So I'm wondering, are we just creating more problems for people?"

^ this is a paraphrased and anonymized question an old CRE colleague and friend asked me the other day.

Many CRE firms are rushing to build data lakes and adopt AI—often without a clear plan for turning those investments into tangible value. Amid today's AI buzz, the real challenge isn't gathering data or moving fast, but using unique, actionable insights that give firms a lasting competitive edge.

AI Bubble and Data Lake Confusion:

- CRE firms often pursue technology-driven solutions without first defining the business problems they want to solve, leading to costly but unfocused initiatives.
- Cleaning, normalizing, and storing data is essential, but it's only useful if data is leveraged for well-defined goals.

Speed vs. Strategic Value:

- Faster access and reaction to data doesn't inherently mean better decisions or higher returns.
- True efficiency and returns require thoughtful process improvements and unique insights—not simply mirroring what competitors are doing.

Wisdom of Crowds Lost to Technology:

- Technology and social media have made markets less efficient, driving herd behavior and undermining independent decision-making.
- Following trends leads to average performance; standout success comes from disciplined, independent strategies and resisting FOMO.

Small Data Advantage:

- Proprietary, micro-level "small data" collected from a company's own operations creates real differentiation, while "big data" is often commoditized and complex.
- CRE firms that invest in their own process and unique datasets, rather than generic market data, gain a true edge in strategic decision-making.

Competitive advantage in commercial real estate comes from clarity of purpose, smart use of unique operational data, and steady, disciplined strategy. Jumping on trends or prioritizing speed alone doesn't deliver lasting success—knowing how to "drink from your own well" does.

Read the full article [here](#).

[How to build a Medieval Castle](#) (Archaeology Magazine)

Guédelon Castle in Burgundy, France stands as one of the world's most ambitious experimental archaeology projects, aiming to authentically build a 13th-century fortress using only era-appropriate tools and techniques. Over decades, a multidisciplinary team of artisans, historians, and archaeologists has collaboratively tackled hard problems, from crafting window coverings out of beeswax-stiffened linen to engineering stone vaults sans modern reinforcement.



Experimental Archaeology in Action: The Guédelon team purposely faces real challenges with medieval methods, uncovering solutions historians never documented—like the use of waxed linen and iron tacks for windows, or the construction of multistyle masonry vaults without iron or concrete supports.

Teamwork and Craftsmanship: Success relies on masons, carpenters, painters, blacksmiths, and basket weavers—each contributing skills and ideas to solve conundrums, often through trial and error and spirited debate.

Continuous Learning and Iteration: Failed experiments (e.g., goatskin window panels warping in weather) lead to innovation, while careful study of medieval texts and local archaeological sites help fill gaps in knowledge.

Impact on Modern Restoration: The project's techniques and insights have influenced high-profile restoration, such as the rebuilding of Notre Dame Cathedral's oak roof—using fresh green oaks and medieval axes instead of dried ancient timber.

Living History: Every stone, pigment, and mill wheel at Guédelon teaches modern experts how medieval communities solved practical problems, coordinated labor, and created vibrant, enduring structures.

Collaboration Over Simplicity: Gothic castles were products of diverse, lean, and highly synchronized teams—contrary to the assumption that massive labor armies were required.

A Never-Finished Masterpiece: As Guédelon's artisans continue to experiment, refine, and expand the replica village, the castle remains a source of continuous discovery and inspiration for researchers and craftspeople.

Guédelon Castle isn't just a building—it's an evolving experiment in medieval engineering, craftsmanship, and collective creativity. Its lessons ripple out to restore historic monuments and deepen our understanding of history, art, and teamwork.

Read the full article [here](#).
