OKLAHOMA CENTER FOR NONPROFITS

# STRATEGIC FUNDRAISING IN 2026

From Activity to Discipline

# Fundraising is Changing, Not Failing

EFFORT IS HIGH

FOCUS IS LOW

SYSTEMS HAVEN'T CAUGHT UP

# Fewer Things. More Discipline.

- Clear priorities
- Strong ownership
- Predictable movement

# The Fundraising Environment Has Shifted

Fewer donors; dollars concentrated among fewer people

Boards expected to open doors (relational capital)

Funders prioritize clarity over volume

Relevance has a shorter shelf life

# Activity ≠ Progress

**STEWARDSHIP WITHOUT STRATEGY BECOMES NOISE**

**GROWTH WITHOUT SYSTEMS BURNS PEOPLE OUT**

**THIS IS AN OPERATING MODEL ISSUE**

# The Strategic Fundraising Model

Intentionally simple — not easy

Built for focus, ownership, and movement

# Six Operating Rules

1. Segment ruthlessly
   - Cold = park | Warm = monitor | Hot = act
   - Lapsed = unfinished conversations
2. Name the connector (the actual human)
3. Define the first meaningful move
4. Anchor to a value hook (why now, for whom)
5. Demand a 90-day win and learn if it stalls
6. Assign ownership: one owner, support optional, deadline set

# Strategy = Project Management + Courage

# Name the Connector

People Move Money

- Name the person, not the role
- Board members are multipliers
- Relationships matter more than tactics

# Updates Don't Advance Relationships

Meeting

Site visit

Invitation

Proposal

# Why This. Why Now. Why Them.

Alignment beats volume

Timing matters

Relevance drives decisions

# 90-Day Wins

- Meeting held
- Ask made
- Commitment secured
- Learn if it stalls

# Ownership

One accountable owner

Optional support

Calendar holds, not intentions

# Fundraising is a Team Sport

EVERYONE CONTRIBUTES, NOT EVERYONE ASKS

FUNDRAISING IS RELATIONAL

MOST STAFF WILL NEVER ASK

ALL STAFF INFLUENCE OUTCOMES

# Staff contributions that make development work

Awareness

Credibility

Story Supply

Respect for the Ask

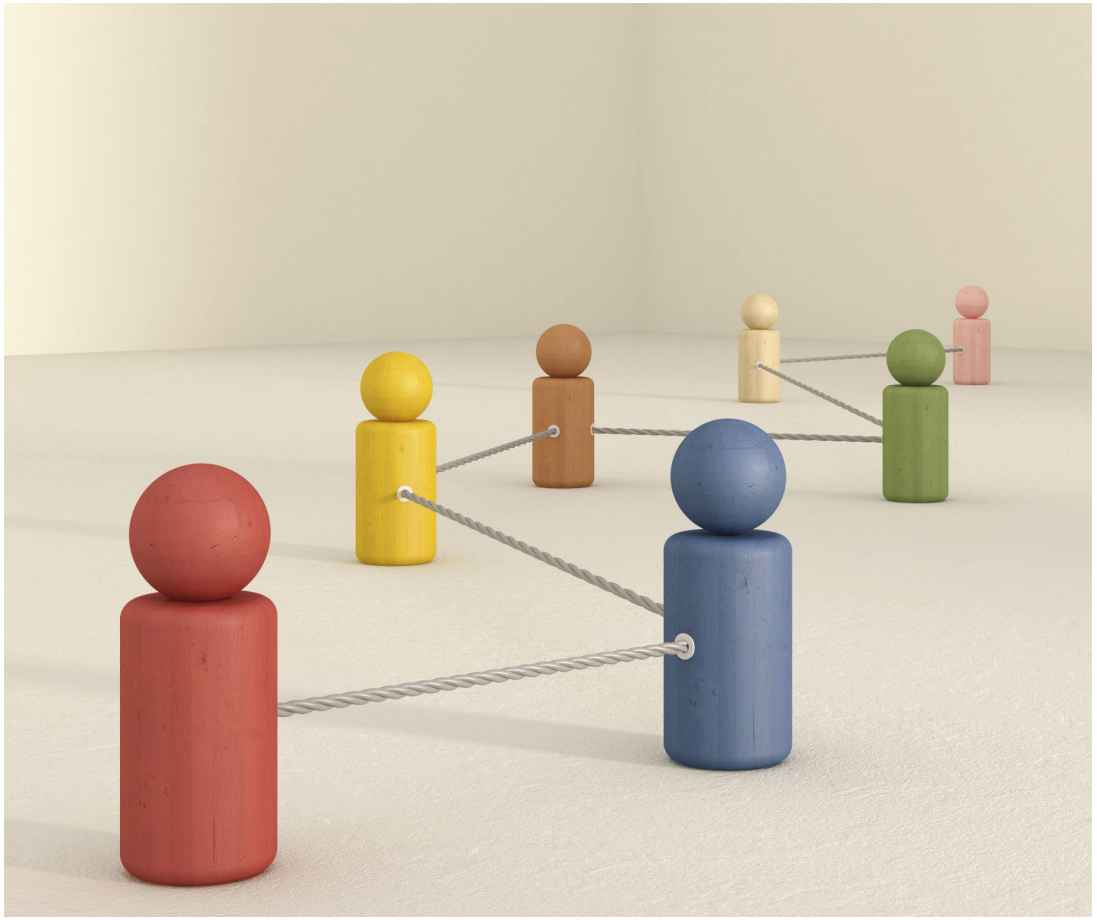
# What the Staff Are NOT Being Asked

- Cold call donors
- Sell the mission
- Attend everything
- Generate money alone

**Let's Be Clear**

# How Staff Power the Strategy Momentum vs. Conversion

- Staff create momentum
- Leadership converts it
- Alignment makes both easier



# The Donor Role
# Donors Fund Clarity

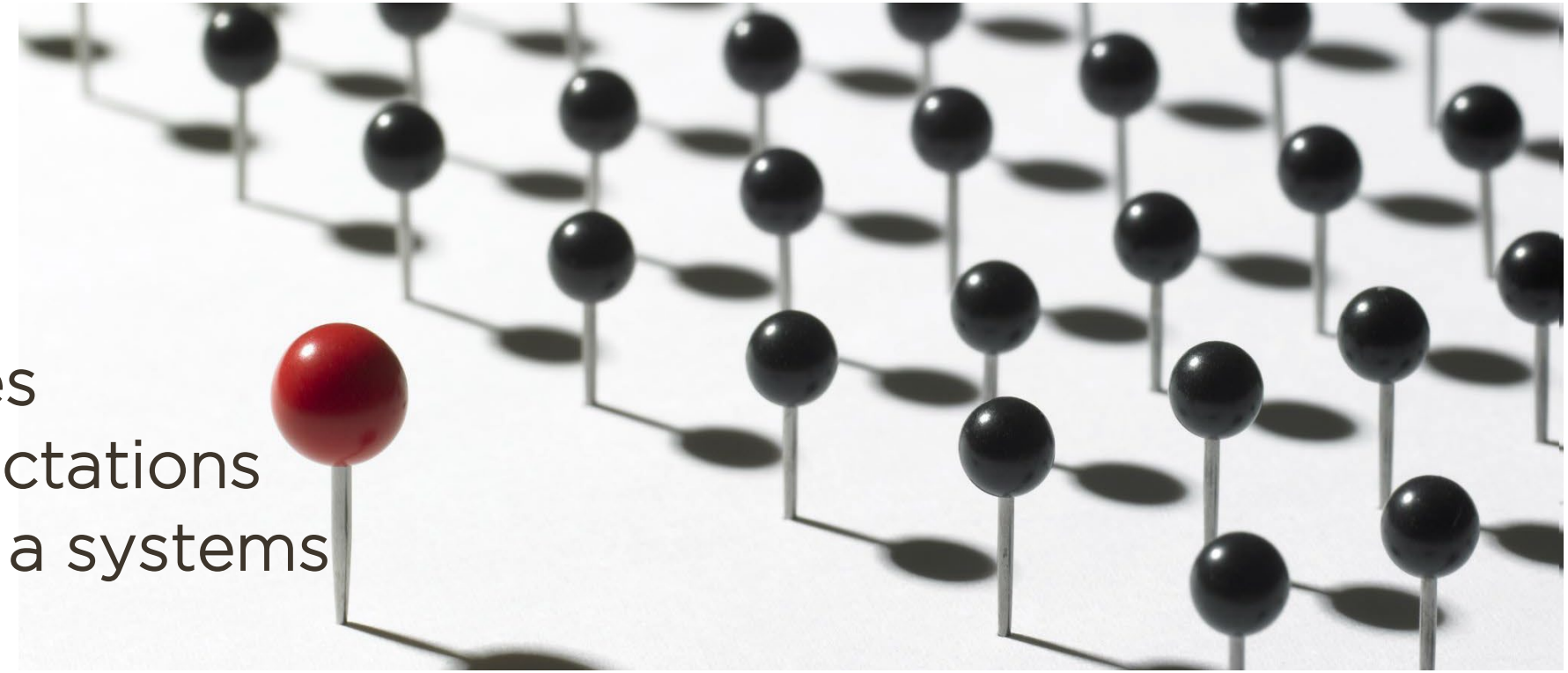
- Questions shape behavior
- Focus builds confidence
- Strategy attracts investment

# The Board Role
# Boards Multiply Impact

Open doors

- Reinforce urgency
- Make meaning

# The Leadership Role
# Protect the System



Fewer priorities

- Clear expectations
- Burnout is a systems failure

# What Winning Looks Like Disciplined Fundraising in Practice

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# What Stops
# What Strategic Organizations Don't Do

- Chase everything
- Wait for perfect timing
- Let discomfort decide

# Final Question
# One Meaningful Move

In the next two weeks

- What will you do that advances a real relationship?

# Fundraising Deserves Discipline

- Reduce noise for momentum
- Increase clarity for growth
- Treat fundraising seriously