



NY - GEO 2025
APRIL 23-24, 2025 | SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY



Help Wanted!!

Building a Geothermal Installer Base

Moderator: Chris Winckler / *Aztech Geothermal, LLC*

Panel: Kris Kyler / *Indiana Geothermal*

Dona Kyler / *New York Geothermal Supply*

Jacquie Scherer / *GeoJerry Geothermal Design*

Kris Kyler

President

- *IGSHPA AI and CGD*
- *IGSHPA Train the Trainer*
- *Indianapolis mechanical license*
- *Climatemaster Train the Trainer*



Kyler Brothers Services Inc

- 1997 to 2005 over 65 employees
- High turn over
- Needed a revolving door
- Located in a small town outside of Indianapolis
- Not many jobs close to the office
- Farm community people used to work outdoors
- Good success converting framers and framing helpers
- They are used to using power tools and view the mechanical trades as a step up the ladder.



Kyler Brothers Services Inc

2007 Moved into Indianapolis

900 systems per year all types

150 geothermal installs per year

Many other local open job positions to compete with

Most applicants were not used to working outside

A lot of applicants just applying to fulfill unemployment requirement

Sold the mechanical side of the business end of 2007



Post Covid

Old wages wont work



2022 BECAUSE OF INFLATION WE HAD TO
GIVE A COMPANY WIDE \$5.00 RAISE TO KEEP
FROM LOSING EMPLOYEES. 25% INCREASE
ON AVERAGE

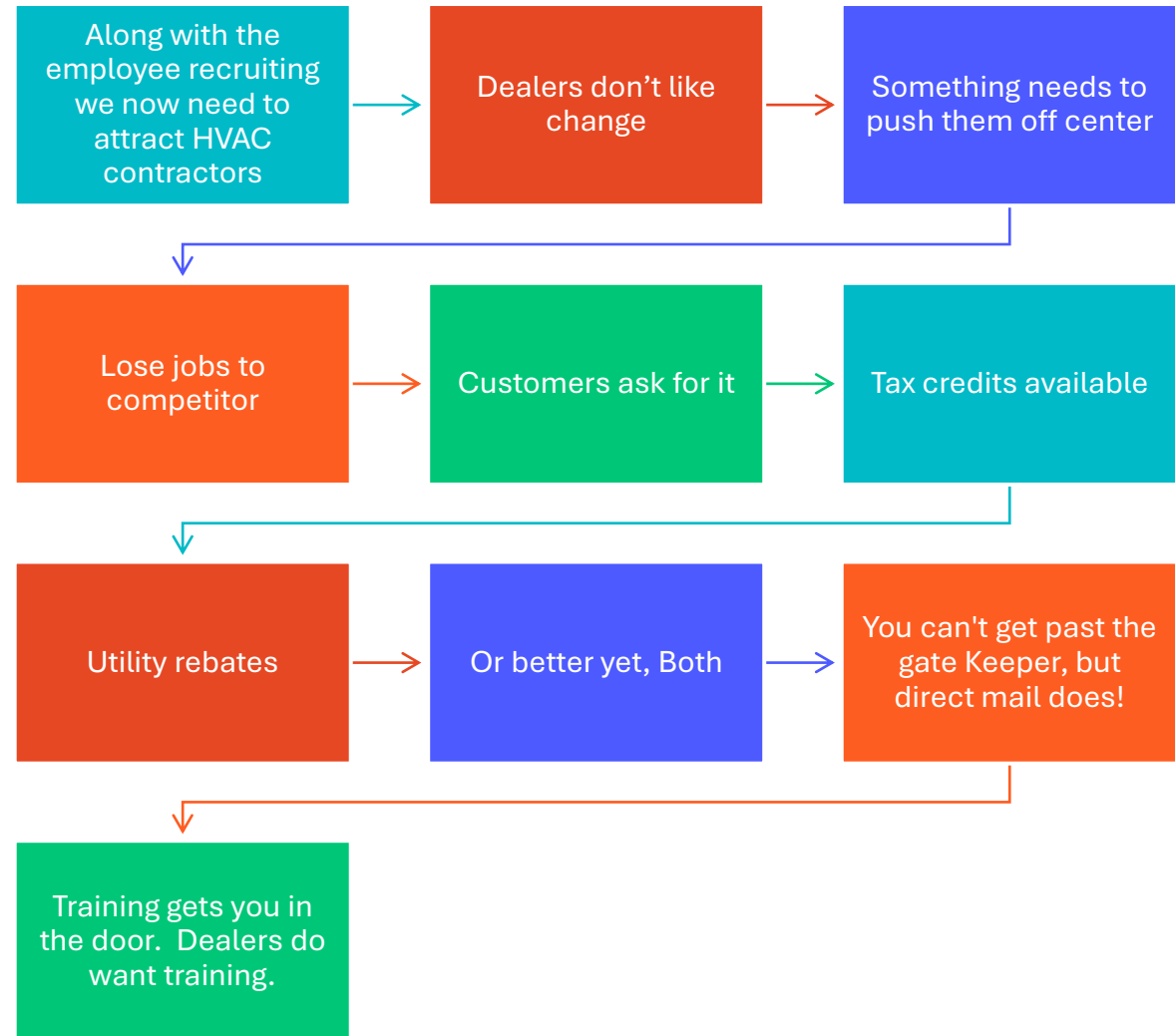


BID YOUR JOBS OR SELL YOUR PRODUCT
WITH ENOUGH LABOR BUILT IN TO PAY A
COMPETITIVE WAGE.



TAKE CARE OF YOUR PEOPLE

Indiana Geothermal Dealer Recruiting



Kris Kyler

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www.IndianaGeothermal.com

*Thank
you*





DONA KYLER

PRESIDENT

IGSHPA Accredited Installer

2025 IGSHPA Board Member

2025 INACCA Board Member



ONLY 10 MINUTES DONA!



Hard lessons learned...

Tax Credits, Service Calls & Polar bears...

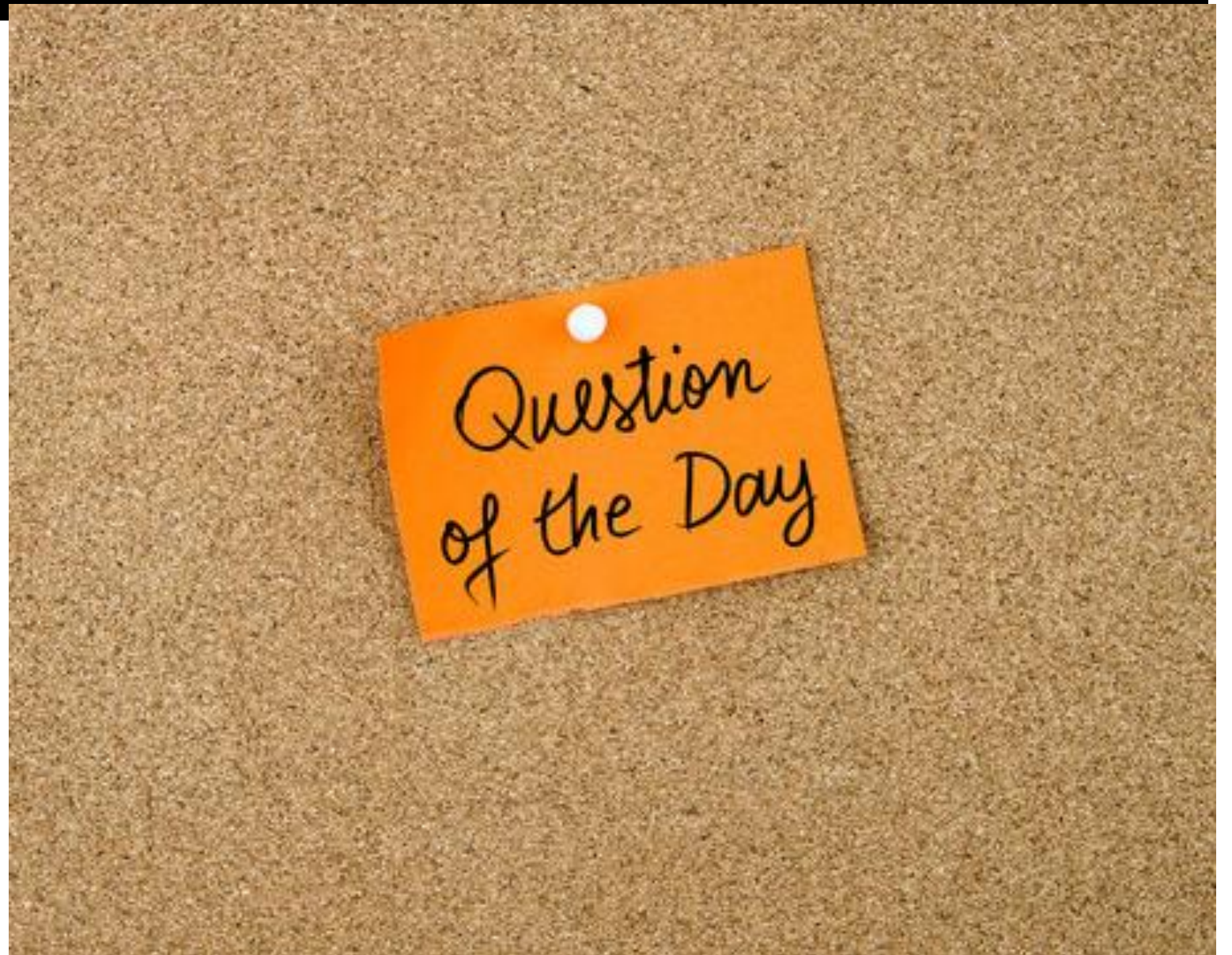
ARCTIC
HEATING & COOLING



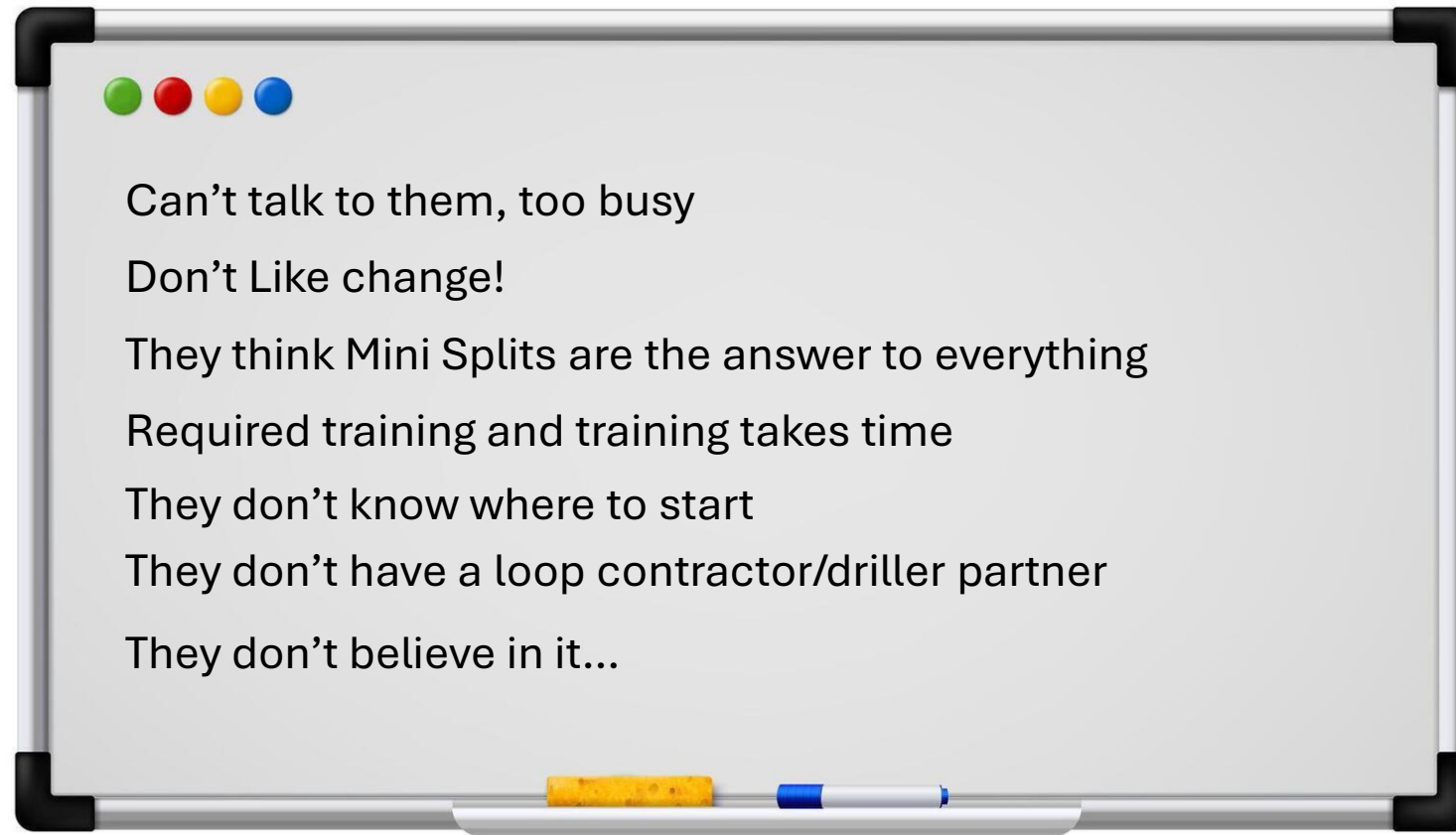
Selling on its merit...



How ?



Challenges of Recruiting Dealers



What Works & Why

As painful as it is, cold calling with a call to action is the most effective. TRAINING!

Direct mail with a call to action, like the offer of training. Follow up with phone call.

Training! NYSERDA Required IGSHPA AI

Training! Service/Install

Training! Make sure they run load calculations

Training! Teach them the Geo-designer

Training! Make sure they have excellent tech support

Training! Understand the Clean Heat Program and all it's quirks.

Introduce your loop & driller contacts. Create the team

Set the contractor up for success!

It's not hard to get contractors excited once they have installed a geothermal, the anxiety and misunderstanding of how complicated they are eases immensely.

Sales training to Overcome objections & concerns from Homeowners...

- 87% concern of high initial cost of the system
- 49% Uncertainty of performance
- 46% maintenance requirements
- 46% limited availability of installers
- 32% technical complexity
- 16% disruption during installation

**NOT EVERY CONTRACTOR
IS A GOOD GEOTHERMAL
CONTRACTOR.**

IT'S OK TO WALK AWAY





And The
Winner is

Dona Kyler

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Thank you!



Help Wanted

Building a Geothermal Installer

Base

Jacquie Scherer

jacquie@geojerry.com



GeoJerry Geothermal
Design and Project
Management

- For 20 years, we've served:
 - Traditional HVAC Contractors unfamiliar with geo who would like to serve the geo market at a lower risk than just winging it
 - Handy Homeowners who are able to provide the sweat equity or subcontract labor to get their own system installed successfully, using our requirements
- We provide the specialty knowledge: design, installation knowledge specific to geo, and manage project / process expectations
- HVAC contractor or Homeowner (with or without subcontractors) provides the equipment and labor
- Geo specialty contractors have been in shortage for decades – Why?

GEOHERMAL
GAS OIL
DOESN'T
WORK

NO HVAC WORKS WITH GUESSWORK

What does 'It Doesn't Work' mean?

For a contractor? It doesn't reliably make MONEY.

- Costs are higher than predicted, even sometimes exceeding revenue. Too much business risk.
- More than just incorrect operation of the equipment!

Common Cost Overruns - For New Geo Contractors:

- Installation costs:
 - Excavation or drilling costs
 - Unfamiliarity with common local formations
 - Ducting modifications
 - Failure to assess / verify duct airflow capacity pre-contract
 - Occasionally, material price fluctuations
- Post-install:
 - Customer callbacks
 - Not educating for common customer mis-expectations:
 - No stat setback, longer run times, contract responsibility issues
 - Poor equipment operation
 - POOR DESIGN: especially earth loop but also sizing or ducts
 - Diagnostic difficulty/unfamiliarity

How to avoid cost overruns

- Familiarize with typical local installation conditions:
 - Local soils and geology
 - Local home and structure build HVAC needs relevant to geo
 - Ex. Often no ducts in the northeast
- Understand customer expectations for geo that are different than fossil-fuel, tighten contracts, educate where needed to minimize call-backs
- Solid foundation in design and install aspects of geo that differ from traditional HVAC

Yeah, easier said than done, where do they get all this geo-specific knowledge?

- Traditional blue-collar skills are gained through on-the-job apprenticeships, some classroom training
- Contractors will need guidance about common geo contracting situations that apprenticeship traditionally provides.
 - Experienced geo consultants can be retained and provide critical advice, but cost is variable
 - Geo training available: IGSHPA Accredited Installer and others (IGSHPA and ASHRAE geo manuals), but only short-term access to instructor for specific questions
 - Manufacturers and distributors are available for some guidance

**To Attract More Contractors to Geo,
We Need Better Tools to Help New
Contractors Reliably Understand,
Control, and Predict Their Local
Geothermal Installation Costs,
Other Than the Pain of Experience**

Specialty Labor / Subcontractors

- What types of geothermal labor / skills are the same across HVAC, so more readily available?
 - Line (high) voltage electricians: 1-to-1 skill set
 - Duct installers (no bypasses, careful with ceiling registers)
 - Manual J Sizing (good skill needed with Manual J procedures, incorrect sizing kills geo performance)
 - Heavy equipment operation: excavation, drilling (not HDPE installation or grouting, but moving the earth)
 - Refrigeration install (for split units) (not diagnostics!)
 - Radiant **floor** piping secondary mechanicals (floor pumps, zoning)

Specialty Labor / Subcontractors

- What types of geothermal labor or skills require extended training or specialty knowledge?
 - Earth Loop design and piping installation, grouting
 - Control wiring and programming (thermostats, aquastats, geo boards)
 - Radiant load / primary piping equivalents: buffer tanks, load pumps
 - Diagnostics of nearly every kind
 - Learn the criticality of fluid flow at source / load heat exchangers, and how most problems are caused there
 - Know your manufacturer's idiot lights, know who to call if you can't parse them (“board guy” or gal)
- At least Designers, Crew Leads, and Project Managers should be IGSHPA AI Certified

Blue Collar Shortages

- Major driller shortage right now – might take government incentives (crew wage supports, subsidized equipment loans?) to resolve
- Blue-collar crew / employees hard to get across the board
 - Kids were all told to go to college or accept failing at life for awhile (“You'll end up working at McDonald's!”)
 - Specific messaging needed to counter this
 - Many young people looking for meaning in their job, making a difference esp. against climate change, geo work supports this
 - Consult on the specific wants of young generation labor pool: what types of wages, what benefits attract most (not always intuitive), etc.



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