



Community 'Group Buy' Programs to Advance Rooftop Solar

Peter Murphy

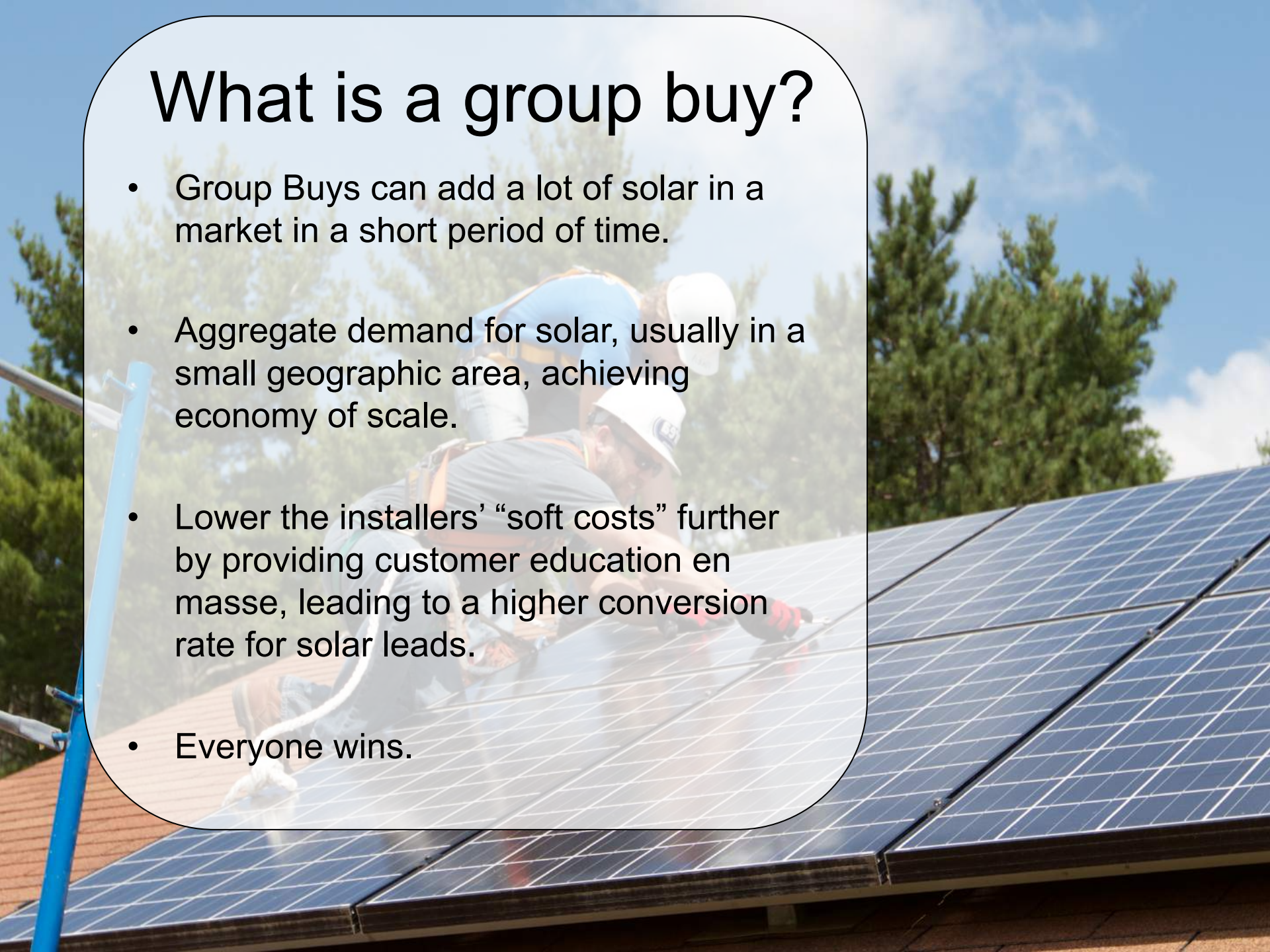
Market Development Coordinator

Midwest Renewable Energy Association

PeterM@MidwestRenew.org

What is a group buy?

- Group Buys can add a lot of solar in a market in a short period of time.
- Aggregate demand for solar, usually in a small geographic area, achieving economy of scale.
- Lower the installers' "soft costs" further by providing customer education en masse, leading to a higher conversion rate for solar leads.
- Everyone wins.



Guiding Principles

- Customers adopt solar when their neighbors or others in close **proximity** adopt solar.*
- The presence of **affinity groups** that advocate for solar lead to more installations in a given area.
- **Discounts with deadlines** help a greater number of people decide that “now is the time.”

*Graziano, Marcello, and Kenneth Gillingham. "Spatial patterns of solar photovoltaic system adoption: the influence of neighbors and the built environment." *Journal of Economic Geography* 15.4 (2015): 815-839., Bollinger, Bryan, and Kenneth Gillingham. "Peer effects in the diffusion of solar photovoltaic panels." *Marketing Science* 31.6 (2012): 900-912.

Structuring Collective Action

- Grassroots Program
- Tiered Pricing
50 kW | 100 kW | 150 kW
- More participants means lower pricing for all



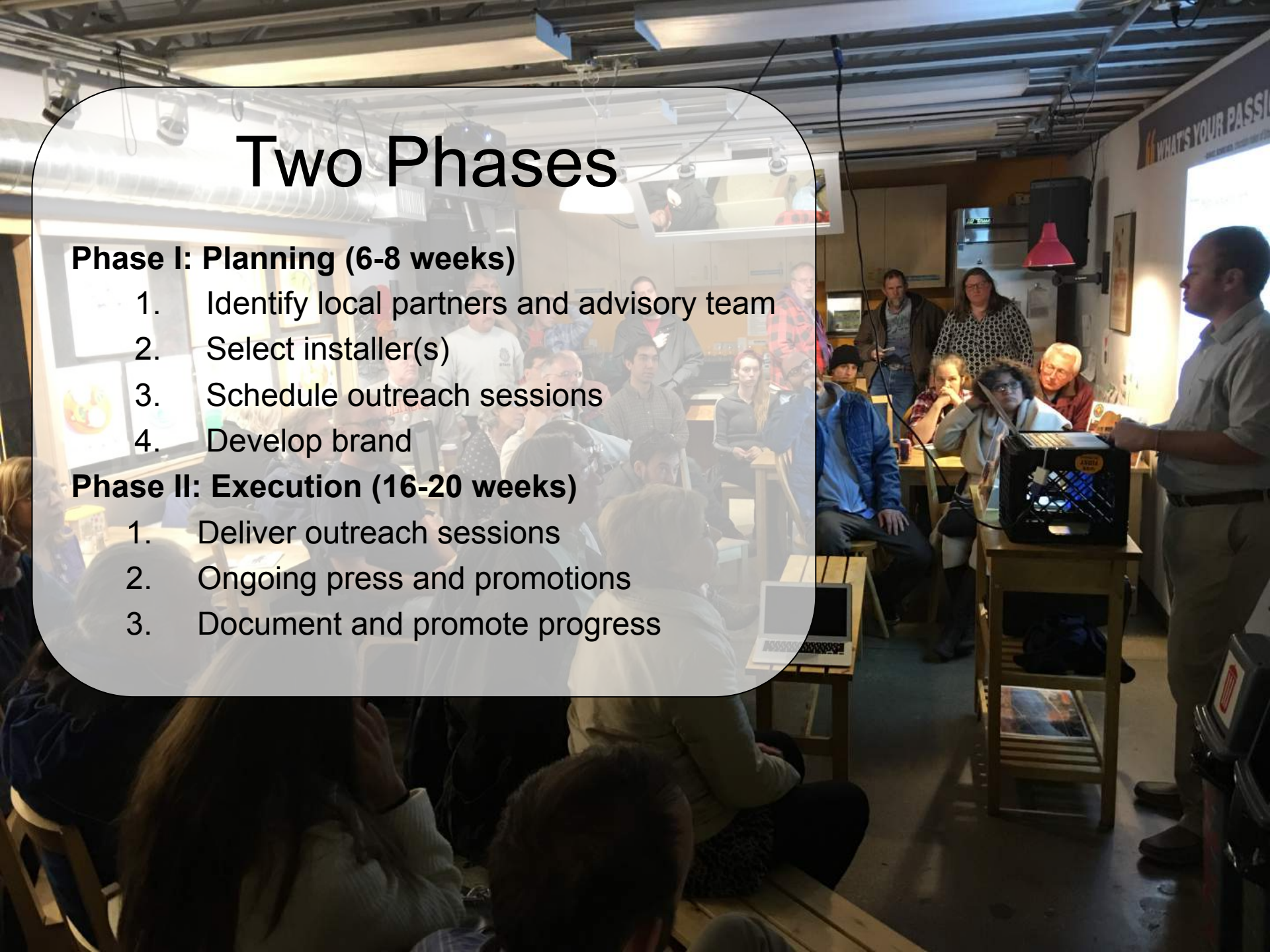
Two Phases

Phase I: Planning (6-8 weeks)

1. Identify local partners and advisory team
2. Select installer(s)
3. Schedule outreach sessions
4. Develop brand

Phase II: Execution (16-20 weeks)

1. Deliver outreach sessions
2. Ongoing press and promotions
3. Document and promote progress



Roles

- Lead Organization
(In our case, MREA)
- Jurisdiction
- Community
- Installer



Messaging

- Emphasis on the power of local people to make the program a success
- Regular press contact
- Participants to the front



Promotion

- Do:
 - Yard Signs
 - Posters, handbills, flyers
 - Emails from local networks/orgs
- Don't:
 - Billboards
 - Commercials



Other Resources

- Solar Urbana-Champaign
solarurbanachampaign.com
- Solarize Guidebook – NREL,
SunShot (2011)
<http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy12osti/54738.pdf>

Contact: Peter Murphy
PeterM@MidwestRenew.org

