

MICROSITE MINISTRY

Episode 004: Establishing a Location

Featuring: Mingo Palacios & Esli Medrano

<https://microsite ministry.com>

Transcript:

- Mingo Palacios: [00:08](#) Welcome back. If you are a regular listener, if this is your first time listening, welcome to the Microsite Ministry Podcast. My name is Mingo, your host. This is my dear and close friend, Esli Medrano who is a microsite pastor in Southern California at The Rock Church. And today, on this episode, we're going to be talking about how to secure a free venue, not just make the ask, but to be a great steward of the opportunity. Let's get into it. Thanks for tuning in and listening. Esli, how have you secured, what's the conversation gone like between you and a venue manager or a venue owner in history as you've launched a free location for a microsite?
- Esli Medrano: [01:00](#) I don't know if it's a Mexican thing and it can just bargain with anything.

Mingo Palacios: [01:06](#) The spiritual gift of bargaining. Yes. I remember some of the disciples had it. Yes, the spiritual bargaining.

Esli Medrano: [01:12](#) Not everybody has it. You just explain what you're doing. You just explain. I have found that if you're completely brutally honest at what you're going to do, "Hey, I have no money. We want to do this thing in your parking lot. Is there any way we can just use your parking lot? Is there any way? Can we use your parking?" That's the first thing that I ask is,

Mingo Palacios: [01:12](#) May we? Can We?

Esli Medrano: [01:37](#) "Can we use your parking lot?"

Mingo Palacios: [01:38](#) Is there a possibility? Can you imagine a possibility where?

Esli Medrano: [01:38](#) "It's just for two hours, maybe three." So you just keep going and ask.

Mingo Palacios: [01:47](#) So details. You come heavy handed with details.

Esli Medrano: [01:51](#) Yeah because you're going to ask a big thing. You're going to ask them to let you

Mingo Palacios: [01:51](#) Create space.

Esli Medrano: [02:03](#) I usually go with the hard ask. So if I want to go in via the event, can we use this event? Can we use this area for a microsite event?

Mingo Palacios: [02:03](#) Yes. Very specific.

Esli Medrano: [02:11](#) And I go for the biggest I can get.

Mingo Palacios: [02:14](#) Ok, so you're like, I want to use your whole building. No, you're not going to let me use your building.

Esli Medrano: [02:18](#) Ok then let me use your room right here.

Mingo Palacios: [02:19](#) How about this room inside your building. Oh No, not the room.

Esli Medrano: [02:21](#) Ok. How about your parking?

Mingo Palacios: [02:22](#) How about a parking lot? How about three parking spaces? So you're saying make the big ask and parrot back according? It's so funny-

Esli Medrano: [02:22](#) Mexican style.

Mingo Palacios: [02:33](#) I would do the opposite, I would go, I would ask for a little bit and then start to be faithful with that and then say, "Hey, do you mind if we..." I'll use the family gym as an example. When we started the family gym, the location came to us. This is where I think, in the last episode we talked about like how do you even map out a location? You were really pastoral when you said set your sights on the people that you'll be serving in, set your sights on the potential audience instead of just being wooed by the place. I thought that was so insightful. But once you get your location or you have an idea, a lot of times people go like, "How in the world do we even begin?" And I love to tell people, start with what you know, start with what you have access to. So if you're at a church and you have a stage and a microphone, you can say to the audience in your service, "We're looking at launching

this thing called Microsites and while it may not make sense to you, here's what we need a place to meet regularly, roughly two or 300 square feet, access to power, a place where we can store a few chairs." Something that basic and then say, "Meet me in the lobby or meet me at the booth, or email me at info@microsites.com or info@yourchurch." Whatever microsites@crossingchurch or info@hillsong, microsites@hillsongchurch.com. You know, I believe. And let people come to you as the Lord inspires them with what they might have to offer. And then you can use your time breaking down the best potential opportunity instead of going and hunting all these plays. Going and hearing 30 no's before you find the one, yes. So I would say start with who you have access to and make the ask broad, but specific.

Esli Medrano: [04:21](#)

I have found also, and again I'm going to get Christianese, but when you pray and you're like, "God, I want to reach these people. Can you make a way?" That's what happened with a barbershop that I was talking to you guys about the last episode is that we've suddenly we that it was like a "ah" moment.

Mingo Palacios: [04:21](#)

Like a shining space.

Esli Medrano: [04:21](#)

Yeah and we asked and they're like, "Yeah of course."

Mingo Palacios: [04:43](#)

I do think that every time, if you saturate everything in prayer, and it's in my notes actually with some of the materials that I give to churches is like saturate the

process in prayer before, during and after because then you recognize God for the things that he's providing. You say like, "Lord, we are going to begin the process of looking for a space. Go before us. Start working on the heart of the manager who owns the place that we are going to eventually be in."

Eslí Medrano: [05:10](#) If we get out of the way, let's face it, you get out of the way, it works better.

Mingo Palacios: [05:16](#) So do you go in with the whole team?

Eslí Medrano: [05:18](#) Nope. I try to just be me and someone else.

Mingo Palacios: [05:18](#) Yeah that's good.

Eslí Medrano: [05:23](#) You don't want to intimidate them.

Mingo Palacios: [05:24](#) This is a huge mistake that you can avoid. A lot of times you want to say, "Oh, well, maybe if we go in with the whole team, they'll see that we're capable and there's people here that are backing it." When I've launched a location and I was doing a cold ask, right? I remember there was a guy who went to our church and he was so well connected in downtown and he loved the idea of launching sites in several places. One person delivered low income housing unit, The Arlington, gave us access to a second low income housing unit, The Arthur, brought to my attention, a parking lot, grocery outlet, and got me connected to a bar, Taste & Thirst. One person brought me all of those different locations and he said, "Mingo, I can connect you to the manager, but you've got to close

the deal." So he teed me up but then it was my job to pitch the vision, be clear with the expectations, be clear with the asks, and then see what they would go for. So, when it came to me talking to the manager, I usually went alone. I usually brought something that gave me the legitimacy connecting me to the church. So if you're on staff and you're starting a microsite, you usually have to roll in with your business card, roll in with a proposal if you want to write a proposal. I never wrote a proposal. I only ever went in and just asked here's what we want to do, very specifically, I want to test and see if your space would be a great place where we could serve the people in this community with the best of what we've got at our church. That looks like me bringing a projector, a sound system, some chairs, if it's outside, a canopy. And here's what I'm asking for access to a plug and access to your space, maybe an hour before the service and an hour after the service just to clean up. They would usually ask this question, "What's the liability? How are you going to protect me from being liable from what you want to do?" Most people who are doing this ministry don't realize that their church has an event insurance clause that will cover over one million dollars for your church to do something off of their property. Use that same insurance clause when you launch a microsite. So you can tell a manager who's at a store, our insurance is actually going to extend over to your location when we're doing something on your property. It's all our insurance.

Eslí Medrano: [05:24](#) Under the name of our church.

Mingo Palacios: [08:17](#) Exactly. That's a huge thing. Executive pastors want to know, "How liable are we going to be when you start doing this out there?"

Eslí Medrano: [08:17](#) There are some insurances that don't feel very happy or comfortable with that but I mean, if your insurance is ok with that-

Mingo Palacios: [08:33](#) I'm going to say if you're at a church that has coverage for your local location, it's not too hard of an ask to say, "Can we extend that coverage when we're doing an event?" And you have to be specific and say, "We're doing it for three hours at this address on these days." I remember having to write those.

Eslí Medrano: [08:33](#) This is how many people there might be.

Mingo Palacios: [08:49](#) Yeah. And these are potentially how many people. Usually that'll get you the permission legally to cover yourself when you're out at another place. So have you ever run into a skeptical property manager and how did you talk them into letting you do a micro-site there?

Eslí Medrano: [09:09](#) I had one person and it was like, "No, no, no thank you." I'm like, "Really? Wait, let me show you what it looks like. I'm going to show you pictures and how it is." "Well, I don't know. Let me talk to my manager. Let me talk to the owner. Let me talk to-" You know, you always have that one person that he needs to talk to.

Mingo Palacios: [09:09](#) Somebody above them.

Eslí Medrano: [09:29](#) Yeah. The more that you show them, the more that you bring in, the more that charm-

Mingo Palacios: [09:35](#) Charm. Charm. Charm. You got to have somebody who's got the gift of woo.

Eslí Medrano: [09:35](#) Yeah you can't really just send anybody.

Mingo Palacios: [09:39](#) It's one of those strength finders, right? Winning others over. Somebody who can, my mom says, "Sell ice to Eskimos" Somebody who can just get you to buy into it.

Eslí Medrano: [09:50](#) And really, you need to know what you're doing too.

Mingo Palacios: [09:50](#) That's so important.

Eslí Medrano: [09:52](#) If you don't know what a microsite is and you don't know-

Mingo Palacios: [09:56](#) Go back to episode one on this podcast, but then you have to be clear. You should try to pitch to people that you're friends with or people that you're in ministry with. Practice your pitch so you don't sound stupid when you're trying to explain what it is you're trying to do, because the less confident you are in trying to pitch it, the less likely they're going to let you use their space

Eslí Medrano: [10:20](#) And when you encounter that person that you're going to ask, you're going to figure out what kind of person

is that? You're going to have to figure out how to read that person.

Mingo Palacios: [10:20](#) Are they leaning in? Are they eager? Are they listening?

Esli Medrano: [10:32](#) Are you going to do the whole thing that I'm asking. Am I going to ask for the big, big room? Am I going to ask for the three parking spots? Where am I going to go? Which tactic am I going to go with? You can't just go with my tactic all the time. You might have to go-

Mingo Palacios: [10:47](#) Well, it's a part of reading the scenario. Again, if you start with somebody who knows somebody, I was thinking about this one person shout out, Kevin Petrocelli. Kevin was the one who went and said, "I'm friends with all these people. I'll connect to you" in some ministry models they called that a person of peace, right? That person had gets you access to all these other locations. Kevin worked for a property management company that managed all these low income housing converted hotels. So there were mountains of people together in these converted hotels that were now apartments, but they had no community. So he said, "You know what? The best thing that happened to me and my family was this church. And so if you could bring this church to these places, I think you're going to be the best for these people." And that's how we got into all of these low income housing units. It gave us the confidence to go and speak to more and more managers because we had a track record and almost like a sales team that

were the guys I would send to go land a spot. Robert Cortes became one of the people that I would send out to go lock a location down because he knew how to sell. He knew how to get somebody to buy into an idea without really having much to promise on the other end. I would say this also, that you want to incorporate them into the ministry. So, you're not just using their space, but you're incorporating them into the ministry that you're hoping to accomplish also. They're as much a part of the pioneering as you are. Right? You're bringing the ministry, but they're providing the space so there's an equal portion of involvement there and it's your job to show them or to communicate to them that they're part of what the Lord is doing also. I remember talking to some owners of a gym and saying, "You guys, by letting us do this, you're positioning yourself as a partner in what God is doing and that's big." I think people want to be involved in something that God is doing if they're believers. If they're not believers, they're super skeptical. So this was the bar that we went into and the bar was like, "You want to do what here? You want to launch a church service on a Sunday morning." And it was funny because they wanted people. They wanted business. And in a weird way not to blur the lines, I said, "I'll bring plenty of people to your establishment. I just want to know that you'll give me access to your space." Because right across the street was one of the biggest drug dealing hotels in downtown area. So I wanted proximity to the hotel. I remember I couldn't get into the hotel. So I set my

sights on the bar across the street, a place where lots of the people from that hotel went and dealt with their wounds.

Eslí Medrano: [10:47](#) But see how you had targeted that hotel?

Mingo Palacios: [10:47](#) Targeted the people.

Eslí Medrano: [10:47](#) You targeted the people.

Mingo Palacios: [13:36](#) Yeah. And then the sell for the guy, it was just, "Hey, we're going to use a small place in your bar." He's like, "Can I drink? You know, can I have customers who are being tended on?" I said, "Yeah, I don't want you to shut your business down. We're the guests here, so whatever you're willing to share with us we'll be happy to take.

Eslí Medrano: [13:36](#) And it's probably blowing peoples' minds right now where they're probably saying, "You have a microsite where there's beer drinking?"

Mingo Palacios: [14:01](#) Yeah, I know, but those are the people need Jesus.

Eslí Medrano: [14:01](#) That's how God works.

Mingo Palacios: [14:03](#) Those people that need Jesus.

Eslí Medrano: [14:04](#) People got saved in that place.

Mingo Palacios: [14:08](#) A bunch and some people were on their last leg of life at that site. I remember one of our volunteers, Sammy Staats, had made a connection to a very old alcoholic who had been disconnected from his family. He was

living at that hotel and that was his local bar. He met Jesus in that bar, gave his life to Jesus there, and then as he passed away, we never saw him again. His daughter came to collect his goods. She had not talked to her daughter for months or she had not talked to her father for months. She got a call that he had passed away while she was going through his things, she found a Bible with the church notes that he gave his life to Jesus and Sandy's phone number. She, his daughter, calls Sammy and says, I don't know what you did or who you were with, but my dad gave his life to Jesus in a very difficult time in his life. I'm just so thankful that you guys were where you were when you were there.

- Esli Medrano: [15:07](#) So this is where we have to think about that religion mindset that we have where you think, "Oh, a bar is not going to be a good thing.
- Mingo Palacios: [15:15](#) That's not a holy place.
- Esli Medrano: [15:17](#) It's not a holy place. How are you going to bring the church into a place like that? And then as we live that story, we remember-
- Mingo Palacios: [15:25](#) This is why.
- Esli Medrano: [15:25](#) This is why.
- Mingo Palacios: [15:32](#) Yeah, I love there's a saying, I think Winston Churchill said like, "I would rather not be in a cathedral. I'd rather set up a tent 10 feet from the gates of hell." Who used to put that on a one of our volunteers is to

put that on his emails. One of our microsite volunteers, he said, "I'd rather be within 10 feet of gates of hell with a tent than in the shiniest cathedral because that's where the people who need Jesus the most are." So, to recap principles, right? You want to determine on your team who has the ability to sell the vision and you want to send them in. And it doesn't have to be a senior pastor. It oftentimes is not going to be the senior pastor that's going to be you.

Esli Medrano: [15:32](#)

A normal person.

Mingo Palacios: [16:14](#)

A normal person going respectfully. And I'll tell you what you learn how to receive a "no". Because I went through several locations where they were like, "Yeah, no."

Esli Medrano: [16:24](#)

You know what the funniest thing is that now that I'm a pastor, now that my thing is being a pastor. So when I get to the ask part, when I get to the owner, "Well, what do you do? What do you do for the church? Oh, nothing. I volunteer." I actually, I am. When I used to say, I was able to say, "Well actually I'm a therapist with kids with autism, but I volunteered this church and we're going to do this." I got more "yes's" than-

Mingo Palacios: [16:24](#)

Does it help to be a volunteer?

Esli Medrano: [16:52](#)

Oh yes. So if I say, "Oh, I'm actually the pastor at microsites." "Oh."

Mingo Palacios: [16:56](#) That's really interesting. Send the volunteers, send the volunteers. I love that.

Eslí Medrano: [16:56](#) It's really funny.

Mingo Palacios: [17:02](#) But you have to get in there and try it yourself because you need to know what it feels like first to get rejected.

Eslí Medrano: [17:02](#) The rejection. Awesome.

Mingo Palacios: [17:02](#) Yeah. So good for your soul.

Eslí Medrano: [17:02](#) It humbles you.

Mingo Palacios: [17:11](#) So yeah, that's the ask part and I think that it's important to remind your volunteers who now get to occupy a space. If you get a yes, they have to treat that place 10,000 times better than any ministry space they're used to. It's a part of your witness, not just to the people that you're hoping to serve in your microsite, but to the people that are letting you be in their space. You're just as much of a witness in that light as you are to the people who are coming and listening to the sermon. Have you ever experienced a failure in the team taking care of a place? Did you ever have to cover that?

Eslí Medrano: [17:50](#) We had that one microsite, I'm sure you remember.

Mingo Palacios: [17:50](#) No names.

Esli Medrano: [18:00](#) No, it's just one microsite that if we placed books the wrong way. There's some micro-sites that are very picky.

Mingo Palacios: [18:00](#) The locations are so peculiar. Particular.

Esli Medrano: [18:06](#) Particular and sometimes we believe that our team didn't do anything wrong, but then we had to like phase the management and we're like, "Oh, sorry, we didn't mean to mess up this one."

Mingo Palacios: [18:15](#) Always lead with the location is always right.

Esli Medrano: [18:15](#) Oh yeah.

Mingo Palacios: [18:18](#) If you're finding yourself defending against a location manager who's giving you access to that space for free, you really need to rethink what your presence is like there.

Esli Medrano: [18:32](#) Yeah. It's the whole being servant. You are a servant leader and that's what we always talk about in microsites is that you being a servant leader, you go there with your humbling butt you tell them, "Oh, we're sorry we move your books. Sorry."

Mingo Palacios: [18:42](#) You have to come as a servant.

Esli Medrano: [18:43](#) You know you had to come with that servant/slave attitude.

Mingo Palacios: [18:48](#) And that you will lead well, you'll lead the repair or you'll leave the next time or the next round if you're presented that opportunity better. So you're not just

going to be like oh passive, "I'm sorry, hopefully we don't do it again." But you rise as a leader and say, "Everything in my control as much as I can do to manage and steward what you're giving us, I'm going to steward it well." And a lot of times that requires you to show up. You. And make sure that it's good before they closed the door and walk out.

Esli Medrano: [18:48](#) Yeah.

Mingo Palacios: [19:23](#) So that's ask. We're talking about a four part process to securing a microsite location. Count, walk was what we covered in the last episode. This is ask, right? What are the questions we need to ask ourselves as we're asking for free space or a location to meet? What are we asking of the venue? What are we asking of our teammates? And what are we asking by way of commitment over time? I always told people just experiment with it because they were always so afraid of the long-term commitment. They were like, "How long are you going to be doing this here?" And I try to pitch a vision that says, "Would you be willing just to experiment to see if it would take off?" I remember meeting at a boutique downtown. We were on their roof and it didn't, in a weird way, it didn't make sense, but I thought, "Oh my gosh, it's so awesome to have a rooftop service."

Esli Medrano: [19:23](#) You were for the location.

Mingo Palacios: [20:13](#) I was for the location. Totally. You know, I look back on it-

Esli Medrano: [20:13](#) You need to listen to last week.

Mingo Palacios: [20:20](#) You're right. Esli, I submit to you. I love the idea of a rooftop location. So I said, "Would you just try it for two weeks? I just want you to say yes for two weeks." And whether or not we get a draw. And it's funny because we drew people because of the allure of being on a roof top. I remember the photos were tremendous.

Esli Medrano: [20:37](#) I remember that.

Mingo Palacios: [20:38](#) The ministry was so minimal because it was not, it didn't have any organic attendees.

Esli Medrano: [20:38](#) You got a lot of likes on Instagram right there.

Mingo Palacios: [20:48](#) Esli, you're convicting me to death. The motive is so important. It's so important. Yeah. Next episode we're going to talk about loving specifically.

Esli Medrano: [20:48](#) Loving on people?

Mingo Palacios: [20:56](#) We're talking about not loving on people, but loving people specifically. This is our call to ministry and microsites is to love people well, not to love on people. Thanks for listening. Esli, if people want to hear and see you, where can they do that?

Esli Medrano: [20:56](#) @micrositegirl on Instagram. Esli Medrano on Facebook.

Mingo Palacios: [21:16](#) That's great. And they want to ask you questions, they can email you too?

Eslí Medrano: [21:16](#) Yeah. Microsites@sdrock.com.

Mingo Palacios: [21:16](#) Microsites@sdrock.com. Yeah I got your back.

Eslí Medrano: [21:16](#) I keep saying it wrong.

Mingo Palacios: [21:27](#) It's OK. If you want to follow along with me @micrositeguy or any of the channels, you can just google, Mingo Palacios. You'll find all kinds of garbage. Thanks for listening. I hope that this is going to treat you and your teams well. I hope that this is going to be something that serves you as you continue to work out the process of doing and launching microsites. We'll talk to you guys next time.

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