



UNLOCKING OUTREACH

What do you do after saying ‘Hello!’

A guide to improving welcoming and hosting at your church.

Simple steps

This is a self-help guide designed for you to apply Unlocking Outreach to building and strengthening your welcome or hosting team in your church. It helps you align people in your team with roles that best suit them. The result is that visitors and new members will be drawn in and want to be part of your strong Christian community.

To get started, all you need is to buy the Unlocking Outreach Workbook (available from Amazon). Then follow this brief facilitation guide, where you’ll be asked to watch two YouTube videos.

Feel warmly engaged

All too often, we miss the opportunity to truly welcome visitors into our churches. With the best intention, those coming into our church might receive a warm smile, a well-meaning “good morning” and perhaps a news sheet or order of service thrust into their hands. After that, do we leave them to their own devices? Are they left on their own to find a seat and, in most cases, not engage with anyone else until they say “goodbye” at the door at end of the service... and that’s assuming someone takes the trouble *to* say goodbye. Will they want to come back next week? Is the church appealing enough? Do they feel included?

As a Christian community we must welcome and host people at our services in a way that draws them in and brings them back time and time again. After all, Jesus did command us in Matt 22 v29 to “Love your neighbour as yourself”. Surely, if visitors and newcomers feel welcome and valued, this will help them make church attendance a major priority in their lives. We’ll start filling those empty chairs.

This is where Unlocking Outreach comes in. It is a fresh approach backed up with a proven, simple tool that can easily be applied at your church. It will have the result of visitors and new members all feeling welcomed and loved. They’ll feel like they are coming home.

Hello, hello, hello!

It might sound obvious but greeting people and welcoming them into church is vital. We need to assume nothing and, instead, tell and show them just how welcome they are. There is a theory that visitors need to be welcomed not once, not three times but five times by five different people to make them feel truly welcome. But you can't just line up 5 people at the front door of your church, nor should you. Instead, there is a much better approach that you will find easy to implement.

What needs to happen?

The first thing to do is organise the people in your welcoming or hosting team according to their God-given talents. These talents are specific abilities which are given to us in a combination as unique as our fingerprints. No-one else can do exactly what you can do. It is these talents that Saint Paul is referring to in 1 Corinthians 12 when he talks about how the different parts of the body need each other to function. You can begin this process by asking everyone to take the Unlocking Outreach Talent Survey which is in Chapter 6 of the Unlocking Outreach workbook (available through Amazon). Start by filling out the survey for yourself and watch videos 2 and 3 on our website at www.unlockingoutreach.com so you understand the basics. Then have everyone else in your welcome or hosting team do the same and report back their Intellect. Note that you should reassure those that don't want to share their talent details that all we want from them is their Primary Intellect. That's it.

Pull this information together and you have the first indications of the Primary Intellects within your team. You can start to deploy them to specific roles where those Intellects will shine. But make sure you understand the four Intellects and their attributes before you continue, otherwise you will start to struggle with this guide.

Bring your team together

At this point, there is a great opportunity to bring your hosting or welcome team together to build a simple plan. Why not have them take the Talent Survey before your meeting so they come bursting with the pride of knowing their Primary Intellect. The team leader could map the team's Primary Intellects using the 'Mapping your Team' download which you can find under the 'Get Started' tab on the Unlocking Outreach website. Sharing this diagram will help everyone see where they fit in the team and why they are needed.

Use the Team Map to provoke discussion about each other's Intellects. Perhaps watch Video 2 and Video 3 together, so as to cement your thinking. The advantage of discussing people's Intellects openly is that if someone feels they are on the border of two Intellects, then talking this through with others in the team will help them clarify their Primary Intellect.

Now, before the cake and coffee runs out, you should plan, as a team, the various roles that need to be filled and who on the team is best suited for that role. We have some guidance for you that follows in the next section.

Who does what?

Start with the Networkers, your church's special forces. You see, Networkers are the Intellect that is best at understanding people. They are your eyes and ears. They are watching body language all the time and they typically read people like a book. They have a gift for listening in an empathetic way.

You might find your knee-jerk reaction is to put the Networkers in the frontline, at the main door, handing out the service sheets. After all, they are the ones who more easily strike up a conversation and naturally give a big, genuine smile. But that is not the best use of your Networkers. If you recall from video 2 and 3, only 20% of the world are Networkers, so think carefully about how you use them. Networkers will more easily engage with people they don't know. That's one of their strengths. They will start to build relationships. But you haven't got the luxury of doing that in the foyer of the church because you will immediately set up a roadblock and prevent others entering the building. The entrance becomes clogged, impeding progress, which can make people feel impatient. Some will squeeze past to find their way into the main body of the church, defeating your objective of trying to welcome *everyone*.

There is a better way. The answer is to have the very efficient PDs in your team at the front door. They are more than capable of giving an initial warm greeting and handing out leaflets. Instruct them to be rigorous about ensuring the entrance isn't blocked as they encourage people, in the nicest possible way, to move into the church. PDs are the best at instructing and following process. Too many times the layout of a church is blamed for not being conducive to meeting and greeting properly but that's because it is assumed the meeting and greeting happens in the foyer or lobby. Your mindset should be to have PDs on duty with the objective of keeping the entrance clear and to keep the flow running by passing people, as quickly as possible, into the main body of the church.

However, like runners in a relay race, the baton needs to be passed, not dropped. So, now it's the time for the Networkers to act. They will be attentive to the throng coming into the church. Being Networkers, they will be watching! They are naturally built to understand body language. And this is exactly when their God-given talents come into play. They will look for and engage with visitors and new faces. Have the Networkers make a beeline for these newcomers and start relationship building. Have them escort people to seats at the front of the church, close to the action, which also has the advantage of filling those empty seats many people avoid.

The Networker may wish to keep that conversation going as they try to start to work out the Primary Intellect of the visitor but, at some point, it is important that they introduce that person to someone else, so the Networker can pick up the next new person coming into the church. For example, you might imagine, if they detect a PD has come in, they may see the opportunity to pass them to someone in the congregation they know to have deep Biblical knowledge, such as another PD. The Networker may choose to rekindle the conversation at the end of the service; they should certainly aim to say goodbye to the visitor they initially greeted if they possibly can.

See you soon!

At the end of the service, make sure that *everyone* is sent on their way with a heartfelt “farewell” ringing in their ears. A meaningful “Lovely to see you. I hope to see you next week” is often enough. It is also vital that the service leader is available at the door to say goodbye, although, hopefully, no one will leave right away because they are fully engaged in conversations with those they met on the way in. And what a great opportunity this is for PDs to have organised and serve coffee and biscuits so that relaxed conversations can be taken further.

On that point, make sure you allow the Networkers to keep conversations going and not to be distracted. You see, Networkers are inevitably ready to help, so they might be tempted, when asked, to get caught up serving coffee or putting the chairs away. Don’t ask them to get involved with the logistics. Instead, instruct them to resist this and keep them doing what they do best... Networking! Allow them to keep those relationship discussions going. Try to have your PDs working on the process related tasks.

Where can other Intellects help?

But what about EQs and Strategists? We haven’t mentioned them. What role can they play?

Only 8% of the world are Strategists so they are quite rare. If you do feel you have a Strategist on the team, use them after the service when everyone is more relaxed and they have time to develop their ideas with others. They are really helpful talking about the big picture and about the key themes and ideas, like those running through the Old and New Testaments. Also, carefully listen to a Strategist’s ideas to improve your meeting and greeting process. You’ll find they will have a few gems to contribute.

As for the EQs, they are very good at engaging with people, but in shorter sound bites. They usually won’t want to get into lengthy, detailed conversations. They know how to network but won’t go too deep. But they are comfortable asking tough questions and closing out on conversations. They will have no problem asking people to come back to church next week or inviting them to an event, such as the new Alpha course that starts next month! The EQ will push to get closure but they will do it smoothly, without rubbing people the wrong way.

Try it out!

Hopefully, you can follow these initial simple steps to help you improve the effectiveness of your welcoming and hosting teams at your church. The key message is to use your Networkers wisely. Think about the position they should play as your first step. Your second step is to consider the role of the PDs on your team. Finally, position the Strategists and EQs.

If you do all this, you will start to fill those empty chairs. Everyone coming in will feel attracted to the church and part of a warm Christian Community. It won't be long before you hear them say "This is the most welcoming church I've ever been to!"

What's next?

As your team grows in confidence, you can introduce them to other techniques in the Unlocking Outreach armoury. Areas such as *identifying other people's Intellects on the fly* and *knowing how to communicate* with that Intellect. Information on these topics and more are in the Unlocking Outreach workbook (available worldwide from Amazon). Supporting videos and other information can be found at the www.unlockingoutreach.com website.

One last thought!

If all this appears daunting, don't worry. Start small... but *start!*