

Innovating with ticket returns: How Shakespeare's Globe and Action Links developed a self-service solution that maximises revenue and drives efficiency

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Action Links



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distractions to a minimum



No Recording

No recording or broadcasts
of concurrent sessions

Innovating with ticket returns

How Shakespeare's Globe and Action Links developed a self-service solution that maximises revenue and drives efficiency



Joel Enfield
Action Links



Rosie Field
Action Links



Matt Hodson
Shakespeare's Globe



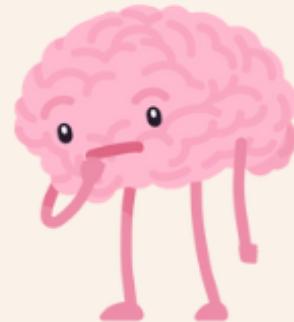
Returns are complicated...

⌚ Are there **other items** as well as tickets?

⌚ Is it **too close** to the performance to return something?

⌚ **Who** is the user?

⌚ What are their **order details** (event, date, time)?



⌚ **What** do they need to return?

⌚ What about **fees**?



Shakespeare for all...

...in our two unique theatres



...through our expert-led guided tours



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...from only £5

Reaching over 750,000 people a year

**SHAKESPEARE'S
GLOBE**



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Digital at the Globe



Small(ish)
team



Big ambitions



Connecting the
whole journey



Focussed on
retention



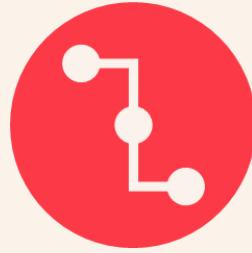
Digital at the Globe



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Connecting the
whole journey



Focussed on
retention



Experimentation



Accessibility



Innovation





Action Links

A subscription based SaaS platform for building powerful user interfaces that integrate with one or more backend systems

A growing list of integrations, including...



SPEKTRIX



stripe

How it all began...

- **2021-22**

Joel & Rosie work together at digital agency Substrakt

- **June 2022**

Joel starts building the first version of Action Links

- **November 2023**

The first beta version of Action Links launches

- **August 2024**

Joel & Rosie team up and take Action Links out of beta



Co-Founders
Joel Enfield & Rosie Field



What Action Links is used for...

- Collecting participant details for classes
- Personalised RSVPs + donations
- One-click Gift Aid opt-in
- Access scheme sign up
- Customer feedback management
- Self-managed school registrations
- Self-service ticket returns
- Paying-off group reservations

The screenshots illustrate the use of Action Links in a website for the Center for the Arts. The top screenshot shows a ticket booking form where Action Links are used to collect participant details. The middle screenshot shows a video player for a 'Behind the scenes' video, where Action Links are used to embed the video. The bottom screenshot shows a membership renewal page, where Action Links are used to collect payment information and offer a discount.



SHAKESPEARE'S
GLOBE



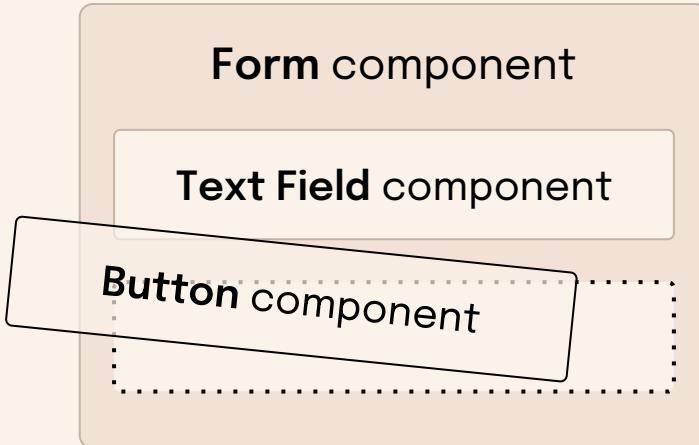
National
Museum of
Scotland



How do Action Links work?

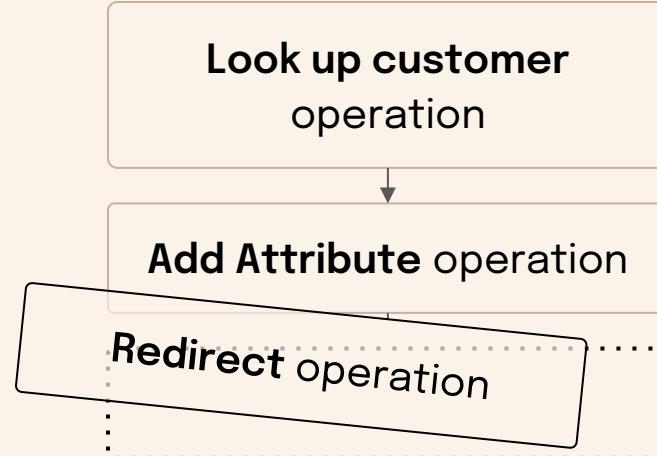
Components

What the user sees when they look at your Link



Operations

What happens when the user interacts



Key features of Action Links

- Build your own user interfaces for **both customers and staff**
- Integrate each interface with **one or more systems**, e.g. fetch data from one place and save to another
- Personalise the content of your Links for each user with **dynamic data** and **conditional logic**
- Customise the **look and feel** of your Links to match your brand, or for individual campaigns



Returns at the Globe

Why we offer returns and exchanges

- To give our customers extra flexibility, leading to overall better customer experience
- To retain income in the organisation
- To encourage advance bookings with peace of mind
- To avoid empty seats if customers can't come
- To avoid unofficial secondary markets / resale issues

Pre-pandemic

Exchanges offered up to 28 days before performance, for a fee

Reopening

Free exchanges up to 24 hours before to encourage audiences to return

2023-2024

Exchanges up to 48 hours before, not consistently charged a fee.

Now

A solution to offer a good customer experience and generate income



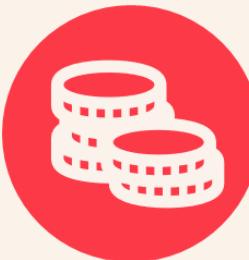
Returns at the Globe

What are the problems with a manual process?



Staff time

Return processing takes up around 60 days of staff time every year; longer if it includes processing a donation or returning additional items



Hard to generate income

With a busy customer on the phone or a queue of calls, it's not as easy to convert returns to donations or collect or confirm additional information



Limited operating hours

With the Box Office only open 10am-6pm, it's difficult for customers (especially international) to return tickets



Clunky customer experience

With 80% of our customers booking online, they expect a digital experience, including an instant result, for all elements of their engagement.



The mission...

For the user....

 Allow and empower users to self-serve online

 Prioritise simple, straight forward UX

For the venue....

 Cut down manual tasks for Box Office

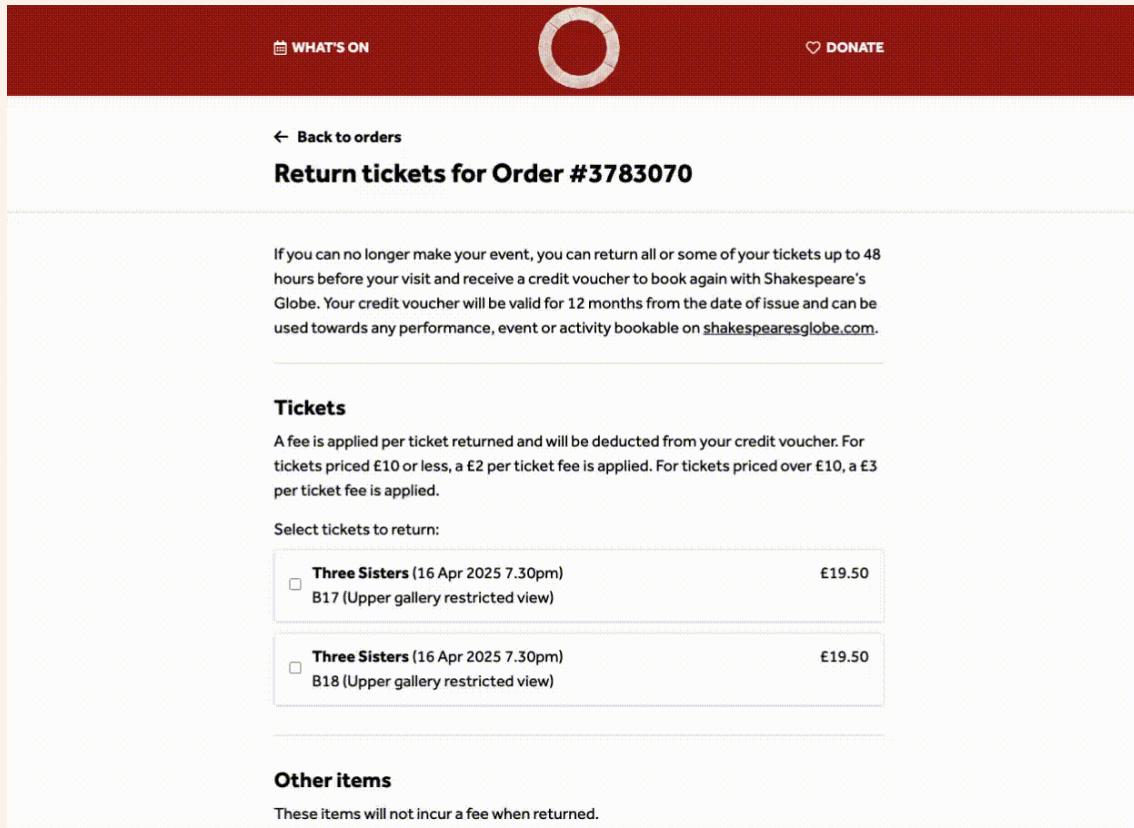
 Maximise opportunities to resell seats



Balance functionality with usability, using partnerships to innovate quickly



Solution: Return Tickets page



WHAT'S ON  DONATE

[← Back to orders](#)

Return tickets for Order #3783070

If you can no longer make your event, you can return all or some of your tickets up to 48 hours before your visit and receive a credit voucher to book again with Shakespeare's Globe. Your credit voucher will be valid for 12 months from the date of issue and can be used towards any performance, event or activity bookable on shakespearesglobe.com.

Tickets

A fee is applied per ticket returned and will be deducted from your credit voucher. For tickets priced £10 or less, a £2 per ticket fee is applied. For tickets priced over £10, a £3 per ticket fee is applied.

Select tickets to return:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Three Sisters (16 Apr 2025 7.30pm) B17 (Upper gallery restricted view)	£19.50
<input type="checkbox"/>	Three Sisters (16 Apr 2025 7.30pm) B18 (Upper gallery restricted view)	£19.50

Other items

These items will not incur a fee when returned.



Solution: Return Tickets page

WHAT'S ON  DONATE

Return options

Would you like to help fund our transformative education work, our innovative productions and our ground-breaking research by donating part of your credit?

Donate the full amount to Shakespeare's Globe

Donate 50% (£15.00)
You get a £15.00 credit voucher

Donate 20% (£6.00)
You get a £24.00 credit voucher

Donate 10% (£3.00)
You get a £27.00 credit voucher

No thanks, return the full amount as credit

Summary

Tickets	£19.50
Other items	£13.50
Admin fees	£3.00
Donated to Shakespeare's Globe	£15.00

Return options

Would you like to help fund our transformative education work, our innovative productions and our ground-breaking research by donating part of your credit?

Donate the full amount to Shakespeare's Globe

Donate 50% (£15.00)

You get a £15.00 credit voucher

Donate 20% (£6.00)

You get a £24.00 credit voucher

Donate 10% (£3.00)

You get a £27.00 credit voucher

No thanks, return the full amount as credit



Solution: Return Tickets page

WHAT'S ON

DONATE

Donate 20% (£6.00)
You get a £24.00 credit voucher

Donate 10% (£3.00)
You get a £2.00 credit voucher

No thanks, return the full amount as credit

Summary

Tickets	£19.50
Other items	£13.50
Admin fees	£-3.00
Donated to Shakespeare's Globe	£15.00
Returned to you as a credit voucher	£15.00

I agree to the [Terms and Conditions](#). I understand that I will not be able to use any tickets I return and that any credit voucher issued will expire 12 months after the date of issue.

[Return Items](#)

Summary

Tickets	£19.50
Other items	£13.50
Admin fees	£-3.00
Donated to Shakespeare's Globe	£15.00
Returned to you as a credit voucher	£15.00



Solution: Success screen

Your return has been processed successfully, and you should receive a shortly to joel@actionlinks.io with the details. Please review this email carefully to ensure you have not returned any tickets in error.

We have issued a credit voucher for **£18.00** which you can use on future purchases within the next 12 months. After this time, any remaining amount will be treated as a non-gift-aid donation to Shakespeare's Globe.

Use the voucher code below when checking out to apply your credit:

6DA5-1865566

Expiry date: 3 Apr 2026 **Value:** £18.00



Ticket return confirmation

Original order #: 3783070
Return #: 3783072
Return date: 02/04/2025 14:14:55

Your Account Information:
Customer #: 6832948
Joel Enfield
joel@actionlinks.io

Thank you for making a donation of £15.00 as part of your ticket return. Your support helps us to put world class productions on our stages, introduce thousands of young people to Shakespeare each year and develop cutting edge research into Early-Modern theatre.

The remaining £18.00 has been issued as a credit voucher for you to use on future purchases within the next 12 months. Please retain this email as you will need the voucher code below to rebook online or via the Box Office.

Please review this email carefully to ensure you have not returned any tickets in error. If you made a mistake, please contact us immediately by emailing tickets@shakespearesglobe.com or by calling 020 7401 9919.

Your credit voucher

Voucher code: 6DA5-1865566
Expiry date: 03/04/2026
Value: £18.00

Please note, credit vouchers are valid for 12 months from the date of issue. After this time, any remaining amount will be treated as a non-gift-aid donation to Shakespeare's Globe.

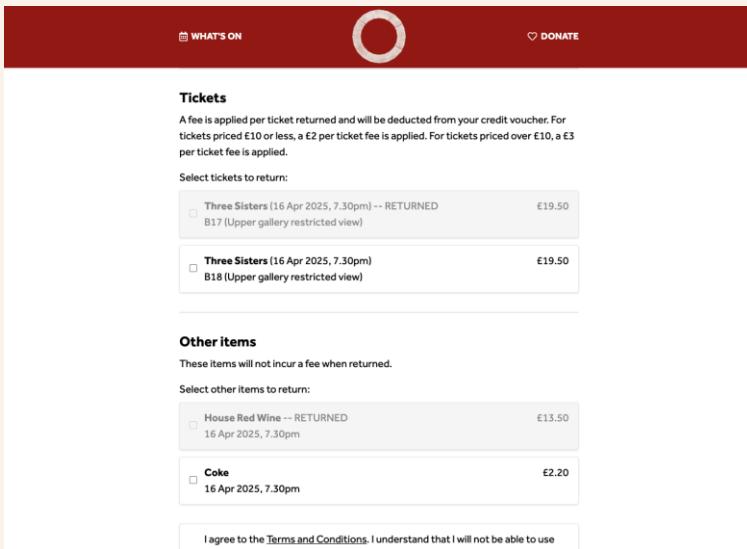
Donation - £15.00

Returned tickets

Pre-Ordered Drinks - 16/04/2025	
1 x House Red Wine	-£13.00
Three Sisters - 16/04/2025	
1 x Access	-£19.50
<hr/>	
Value of returned tickets:	£33.00
Fees:	£0.00



Solution: Returned orders



WHAT'S ON  DONATE

Tickets
A fee is applied per ticket returned and will be deducted from your credit voucher. For tickets priced £10 or less, a £2 per ticket fee is applied. For tickets priced over £10, a £3 per ticket fee is applied.

Select tickets to return:

<input type="checkbox"/> Three Sisters (16 Apr 2025, 7.30pm) -- RETURNED B17 (Upper gallery restricted view)	£19.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Three Sisters (16 Apr 2025, 7.30pm) B18 (Upper gallery restricted view)	£19.50

Other items
These items will not incur a fee when returned.

Select other items to return:

<input type="checkbox"/> House Red Wine -- RETURNED 16 Apr 2025, 7.30pm	£13.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Coke 16 Apr 2025, 7.30pm	£2.20

I agree to the [Terms and Conditions](#). I understand that I will not be able to use

Tickets

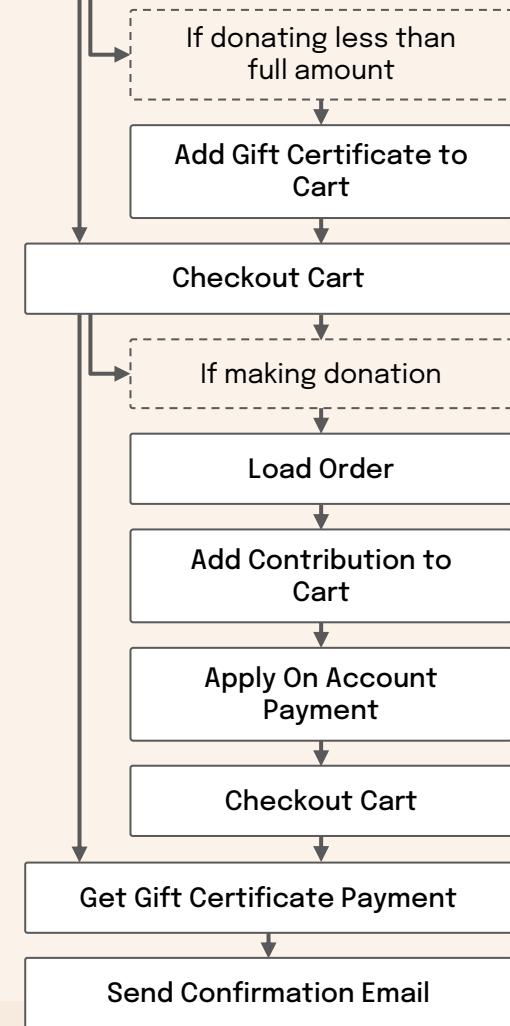
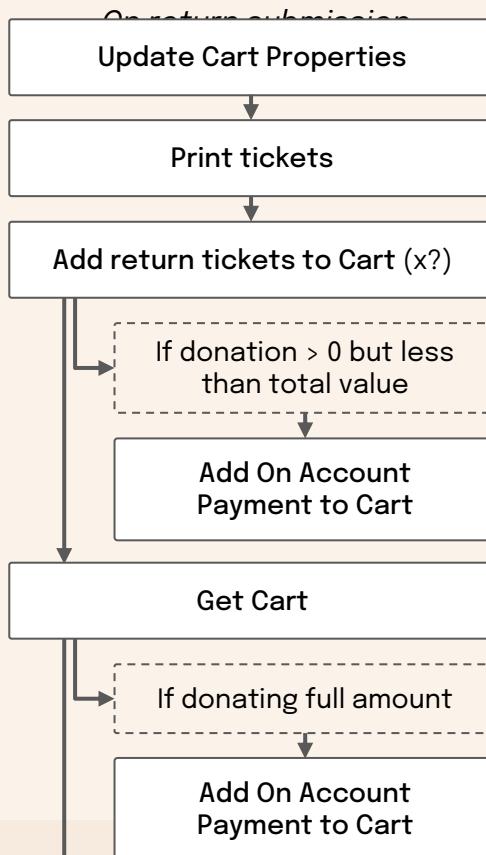
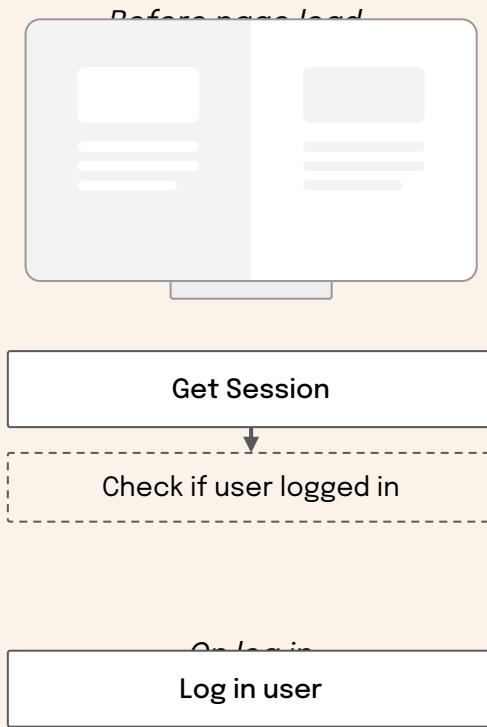
A fee is applied per ticket returned and will be deducted from your credit voucher. For tickets priced £10 or less, a £2 per ticket fee is applied. For tickets priced over £10, a £3 per ticket fee is applied.

Select tickets to return:

<input type="checkbox"/> Three Sisters (16 Apr 2025, 7.30pm) -- RETURNED B17 (Upper gallery restricted view)	£19.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Three Sisters (16 Apr 2025, 7.30pm) B18 (Upper gallery restricted view)	£19.50



Why is returning tickets so difficult?



What can you customise? **Product criteria**

Tickets

A fee is applied per ticket returned and will be deducted from your credit voucher. For tickets priced £10 or less, a £2 per ticket fee is applied. For tickets priced over £10, a £3 per ticket fee is applied.

Select tickets to return:

<input type="checkbox"/> Three Sisters (14 Apr 2025, 7.30pm) C12 (Pit)	£34.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Three Sisters (14 Apr 2025, 7.30pm) C13 (Pit)	£34.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Three Sisters (14 Apr 2025, 7.30pm) C14 (Pit)	£69.00

Other items

These items will not incur a fee when returned.

Select other items to return:

<input type="checkbox"/> House Red Wine 14 Apr 2025, 7.30pm	£13.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Coke 14 Apr 2025, 7.30pm	£2.20

- Separate different types of product on the page
- Easier to scan and select
- Categorised via Tessitura **Product Types / Seasons**
- Should any products be **excluded from displaying?**



What can you customise? **Business rules**

Number of days out from event

>2 days

<2 days



Return
permitted

Return not
permitted

Fee set up in Tessitura

Fee Maintenance		Fee Rules
Available Fees		
BO Ticket Return Fee 25		
BO Ticket Return Fee Yard 25		
Booking form processing fee		
COVID-19 Group Tours		
COVID-19 Lively Action		
COVID-19 Playing Shakespeare		
Demo - £12 Sword Fighting		
Demo- Sword Fighting £10 TRADE		
EDU Practitioner Fee		
Europe Delivery Fee 0.5-1kg		
Europe Delivery Fee 0-0.5kg		
Europe Delivery Fee 1-2kg		
Europe Delivery Fee 2-4kg		
EX - Balcony Rm Dressing Demo		
EX Cancellation fee		
EX Demo - Dressing £10 TRADE		

Fee Details	
General Settings	
Fee Description:	BO Ticket Return Fee 25
Web Alias:	
Ticketing Season:	(all in fyyear)
Fiscal Year:	2025
Business Unit:	Shakespeare's Globe
General Ledger No:	411150-1;SGT ;BO ;
Campaign:	25 Return Tickets Donation
Designation:	Ticketing
Fee Category:	Service
Inactive:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calculation Method	
Fee Type:	Rule-Based
Calculation Rules	
Fee Frequency:	Performance Seat Level

Summary

Tickets	£19.50
Other items	£13.50
Admin fees	£-3.00
Donated to Shakespeare's Globe	£15.00
Returned to you as a credit voucher	£15.00



What can you customise? **Donation ask**

Return options

Would you like to help fund our transformative education work, our innovative productions and our ground-breaking research by donating part of your credit?

Donate the full amount to Shakespeare's Globe

Donate 50% (£14.00)

You get a £14.00 credit voucher

Donate 20% (£5.60)

You get a £22.40 credit voucher

Donate 10% (£2.80)

You get a £25.20 credit voucher

No thanks, return the full amount as credit

- Customise all the **messaging**
- **Fixed amounts** or **percentage** based on return value
- Choose how many **options / amounts**
- **Vary options** based on what's being returned, or other things



What can you customise? **Return methods**

Gift Certificate

- Easy to expire with the Gift Certificate Expiration Utility
- Credit not attached to customer so harder to remind customer to spend it
- Easy to lose code
- Customer can share with others

On Account Credit

- Less easy to expire
- Tied to account so easy to redeem in TNEW checkout
- Pull amount into emails to remind customers to use

Other options

- Exchanges and refunds



What can you customise? **Additional questions & copy**

Return options

I agree to the [Terms and Conditions](#). I understand that I will not be able to use any tickets I return and that any credit voucher issued will expire 12 months after the date of issue.

Return items

Type

- ✓ Choose component type
- General – Text
- General – HTML
- General – Container
- Form – Text Field
- Form – Number Field
- Form – Email Field
- Form – Password Field
- Form – Textarea Field
- Form – Barcode Field
- Form – Date Field
- Form – Range (slider)
- Form – Checkbox**
- Form – Checkbox Group
- Form – Radio buttons
- Form – Select Dropdown
- Form – Autocomplete Field (Algolia)
- Form – Read only Field
- Form – Hidden Field
- Form – Submit Button



Return options

Would you like to help fund our transformative education work, our innovative productions and our ground-breaking research by donating part of your credit?

Donate the full amount to Shakespeare's Globe

Donate 50% (£14.00)

You get a £14.00 credit voucher

Donate 20% (£5.60)

You get a £22.40 credit voucher

Donate 10% (£2.80)

You get a £25.20 credit voucher

No thanks, return the full amount as credit

Consider the psychology

- Guide the user with UI and copy
- Force a response
- Frame the question
- Highlights parts and include context
- Consider ordering
- Iterate



<https://action.shakespearesglobe.com/return-tickets?order=3783011>

ACCOUNT BASKET

WHAT'S ON

MY DETAILS
MY PREFERENCES
EVENTS
DIGITAL EVENTS

EVENTS.

View your upcoming events and access your digital tickets.

→ Plans changed? No problem...

If you can no longer make your event, you can return all or some of your tickets up to 48 hours before your visit and receive a credit voucher for the value of the tickets, minus a small per-ticket fee*, to book again with Shakespeare's Globe.

Return tickets

*A £2 per ticket fee is charged for tickets priced at £30 or less. A £3 per ticket fee is charged for tickets priced over £30. Our online return tickets service is in beta - if you have any issues completing your return, please [email our ticketing team](#).

Three Sisters

4 April 2025 7:30pm

VIEW TICKETS ↗

WHAT'S ON	DONATE
<h2>Your ticket orders</h2>	
<p>Order #3783003</p>	
Order date: Tue 25 Mar 2025, 10.10am	
Cymbeline	Fri 4 Apr 2025, 2.00pm
Pre-Theatre Dining	Fri 4 Apr 2025, 6.15pm
Return tickets from this order	Returnable items total: £60.50
<p>Order #3783015</p>	
Order date: Wed 26 Mar 2025, 11.17am	
Romeo and Juliet	Wed 30 Apr 2025, 2.00pm
Return tickets from this order	Returnable items total: £130.00

ticketss@shakespearesglobe.com



What you need to set up in Tessitura



Identify the rules that denote what's returnable - Seasons, Product Groupings, etc.



Gift Certificate Payment Method (if returning to Gift Certificate)



On Account Payment Method (if supporting donations or returning to On Account) - make sure to enable Gift Aid



Fee(s) - usually per ticket, can vary between products



Security settings



Return confirmation email and updates to confirmation email



Reporting to track impact



Measuring success

- Amount of **time being saved** in Box Office hours/admin
- % Proportion of tickets logged as 'not attended' (via scanners), but not actually returned
- £ Volume of **additional revenue made** from resold returned seats
- % Proportion of returns where **some/all of the value is donated**
- £ **Volume in donations** received via returns
- Volume of **dry/wet stock 'Other items' saved**



But what if my venue doesn't offer returns?

Other options to consider...



Ticket insurance / Face Value Resellers



COVER GENIUS



Action Links | © 2025

So how do I get started?

Some takeaway top tips



Takeaway top tips

What to prioritise when trying to champion innovation in an organisation



- Put your audience at the heart of all your thinking
- Prioritise co-design with partners and stakeholders to build buy-in
- Be open to experimentation and a test-and-learn approach
- Explore solutions that support multiple objectives



Takeaway top tips

How to use partnerships to help break new ground fast



- Look across the sector and beyond
- Have other venues tried something similar? Are there subject matter specialists you can ask for advice?
- Many voices are stronger than one
- Lean on each other to plan and scope together from the start



Takeaway top tips

How to optimise to unlock additional revenue



- Two ways – improve the conversion rate, or change the product (including adding variants)
- Can you improve the messaging and/or design? Even tweaking the ordering can make a difference
- Timings are key – if you don't convert a customer initially, when's the next opportunity to convert them?



Any questions?



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Matt Hodson

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Q&A

Please use a microphone so that everyone in the room can be part of the conversation