

SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE

A tricky taboo topic emerged when I worked with Shakespeare's Globe, the iconic theatre structure on London's Bankside. From the start, it was easy to see that entering the site was less glamorous than could be expected. Two entrances were used, but the primary route was ignored. Worse, the primary route is a spectacular entrance through wrought iron gates that face the River Thames and its throngs of strolling visitors. The entrance had been closed because site operational staff were afraid that the premises would be exposed to graffiti, unscrupulous visitors and unhelpful traffic flow. Opening the gates was a taboo topic; one that no one believed could be challenged. So, taking a gamble, I opened the gates one day. Staff condemned and praised the action in equal numbers. Visitors, however, walked into the place as naturally as if they had been doing it for years.

Afterwards, a trial opening period was held, proving that the open gates attracted more people. The result is that the gates are now open each year during the key visitor seasons. The previous ten years of worries - vandalism, revenue and traffic flow - were solved too, just by adding a short piece of red barrier rope and moving a security desk by a few feet.

Extract from *The Truth About Creativity*, © Patrick Harris (2009).