

Tutorial



Slingshot's Mat Burhouse demonstrates how to approach, create and use logos, from sketch book to style guide...

Logos are possibly the most subjective thing you'll ever have to design. They can take a matter of minutes to create but weeks to get approved. Conversely, they can take months of research and development and only minutes to get signed-off.

In this tutorial, we show you how to make the process of designing logos quicker and more productive. We begin by explaining a few steps you can take at the start of a logo-design project. These include how to get the most from the briefing process by asking your clients the right questions, and what you should consider when embarking on the design.

In addition, we explain how we approached and implemented the Fenchurch Clothing logo using Adobe

Illustrator CS2 and demonstrate some of the tried-and-tested methods we use to create client logos.

We also look at how to choose the right typeface for the job, and explain how to produce a style guide to ensure the appearance of your logo remains consistent for years to come.

Our chosen software for logo creation is always *Illustrator*, because the vector format is the best possible file format for logos. A vector logo can be printed and enlarged without loss of quality, can be used by vinyl cutters for signage, and converted to any image format for screen-based media. You should always use a vector-based application to create your logo unless it's of a photographic nature or requires complicated 3D shading, >



Expertise and illustration provided by Mat Burhouse at Slingshot, www.slingshot.co.uk.

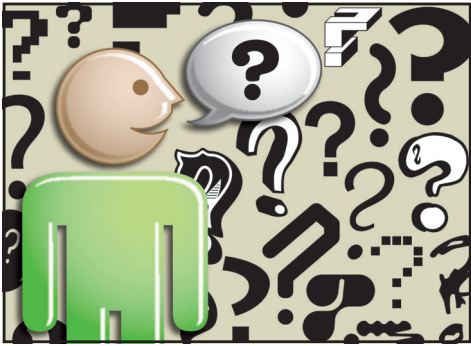


You'll find a sketch of the Fenchurch logo created in this tutorial on the *Computer Arts Projects CD87*, in the DiscContent\Tutorials\Tutorial Files\Logo creation folder.



Part 1: The brief

You need to follow a comprehensive brief to design a successful logo...



Briefing sheet

You could get your client to complete your own briefing sheet. In this, ask them whether the logo will appear in one colour, whether it will need to work on a small scale, and where it will be used (pay particular attention to the response to that one). Ask them if they've had any initial ideas and get them to include rough sketches of these. Just be as thorough as you can.



1 In most cases, you'll get a brief from your client. It's rare to get all of the information you need from these initial details though, so the first thing to do is find out more. Don't underestimate the importance of a good brief, because it could save you a lot of time and hassle in the long run.

2 A logo is often the first thing a company gets designed. In many cases, it's also the first time the client has given a design brief and this usually means that they're not very good at it. It's up to you to ask the right questions, preferably before you start any work.

3 Try to find out about your client's personal likes and dislikes as well as their company background and ethos. Ask if they've seen any logos they really love or hate and if there are any colours or symbols they're keen to use. This will save you time further down the line.

Part 2: Initial considerations

There are many reasons why logos should be kept simple. Here are a few of them...



1 The message: A logo represents a company's values and characteristics – it projects an image and tells a story. Try to think about the tone of your designs and what message they will send to people. Do you need to project an image of quality, strength or maturity? Or should the logo look cheap and cheerful or cheeky?

2 Market: Consider a company's industry and audience and what their expectations are. Are there any market trends that predict the way they should look? Should you conform to those preconceptions or break the rules? You would expect a logo for a funky TV station to look very different to that of a solicitor.

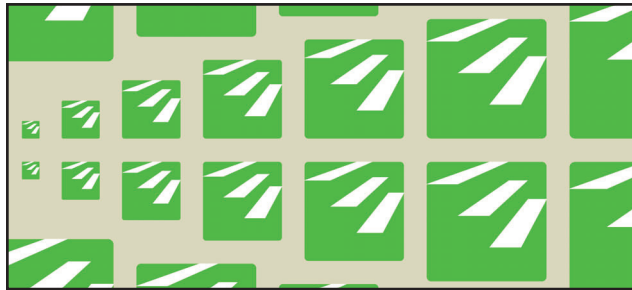


3 Shelf life: Most logos are used for years, so be careful not to use 'of the moment' typefaces or styles that may date quickly. Don't be too literal either – a company selling records today might be flying people to space in 25 years.



4 Colours: Be careful not to rely on colours in your design, especially if items touch or overlap. One way to make sure that your logo works in a single colour is to create it in black and white and apply colour to it later on.





5 Sizes: Experiment with your designs at different sizes. If you've already got them on your computer, zoom in and out to see if they work as tiny icons or when they're full screen. Try printing them out at various sizes – we normally start at 16px square and work our way up.

6 Screens: If you are designing a logo for screen-based media, be particularly careful of thin lines or very light typefaces. Also consider different types of screens. You shouldn't have any problems with CRT monitors, but beware the LCD. They can make text and graphics appear pixelated or rough.



Part 3: Choosing a concept

Come up with a number of ideas and get them down on paper...



1 The best place to start when designing a logo is on paper. Sketch as many ideas as you can and write down any words that spring to mind. This is a free-association exercise and some ideas may be too obvious, so it's best to get them out of your mind and move on.



2 If you're struggling for ideas, try looking up key words in a dictionary or thesaurus or searching Google images for inspiration. If you keep a sketch book then look at previous drawings – you're bound to have unused ideas from previous projects, so you may already be sitting on the perfect solution.



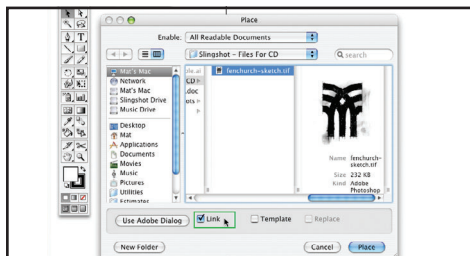
3 We've found the best way to present logos is by showing one or two ideas per page. This gives each design space to breathe and is less distracting than a whole page of ideas. Neatly mount your designs and, if you're not presenting them in person, include notes to explain your concepts.

Sketch first

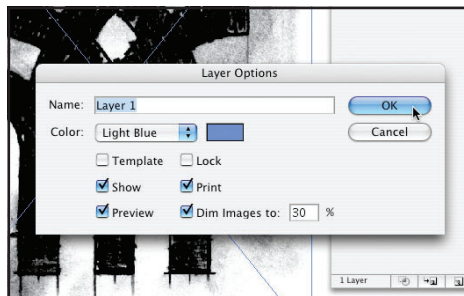
Even if you don't want to present sketches to your client, it's much quicker to get your ideas down on paper first. You can see which ones work before you spend time producing them properly and you'll be less precious about your work. If an idea is a bad one or doesn't work then ditch it, and get it out of your head.

Part 4: Logo production

With your preparation done, turn your sketch into a logo using Adobe *Illustrator* CS2...

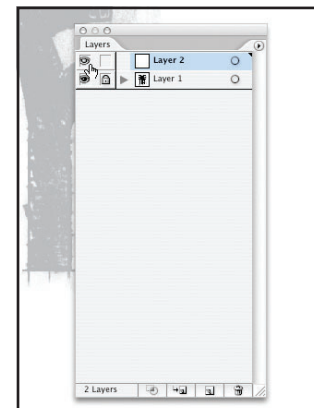


1 You could draw your logo in *Illustrator* rather than scan it, but some designs lose certain subtleties through this approach. So, begin by choosing File>Place in *Illustrator* and selecting fenchurch-sketch.tif from the 'Logo creation' folder on CD87. In the Place dialog window, select Link to help reduce the size of your *Illustrator* file.

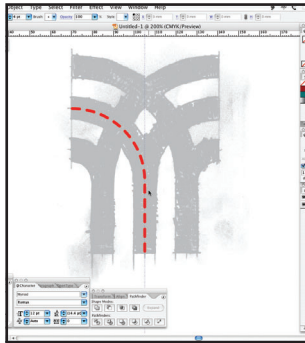


2 Open the Window>Layers palette (F7) and double-click on the layer that contains the scan. Select the 'Dim Images to: 30%' checkbox. This knocks the sketch back a bit to make it much easier to draw over.

3 Use the Layers palette to lock that layer. While you're there, make a new layer and change its visibility to Outline by holding down Ctrl or Cmd and selecting the eye icon. This is an easier and much more accurate way to work.



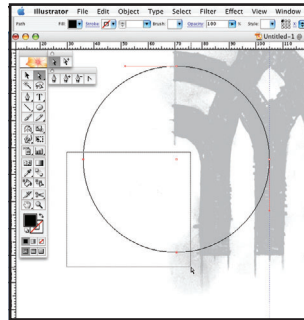
Logo production continued...



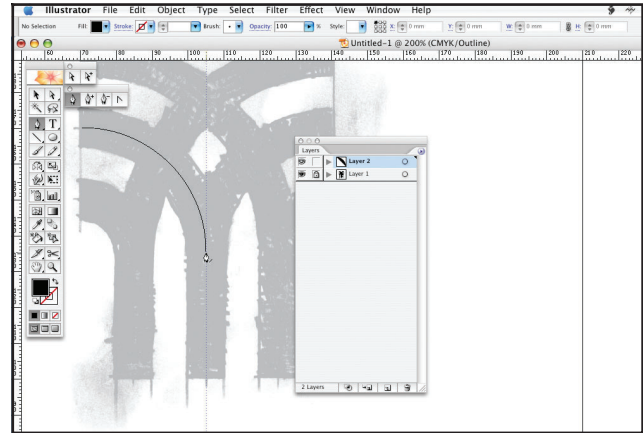
4 Our logo is symmetrical, so drag a vertical guide to the centre point of the sketch. We'll only draw half of the logo and use the Reflect tool to mirror it. The best way to create this design is to draw lines along the centre of each arch and apply a stroke to it later.

Using layers

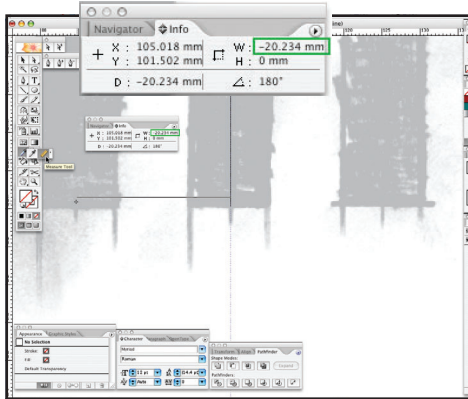
If you don't use layers in Illustrator then now's the time to start. Layers will make your life much easier once you get used to them. You can lock them to prevent you from moving objects accidentally, hide them when items are obscuring one another, use various visibility options and generally keep your document easier to work with.



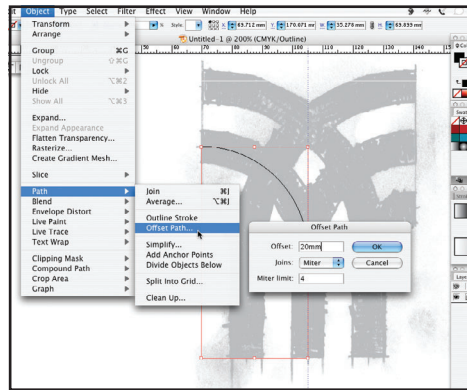
5 Draw a circle for the middle arch, making sure it's lined up perfectly with the vertical guide (you'll need to tweak the scale and position). Use the Direct Selection tool (A) to select the left and bottom points of the circle and then hit Delete so you're just left with a quarter circle.



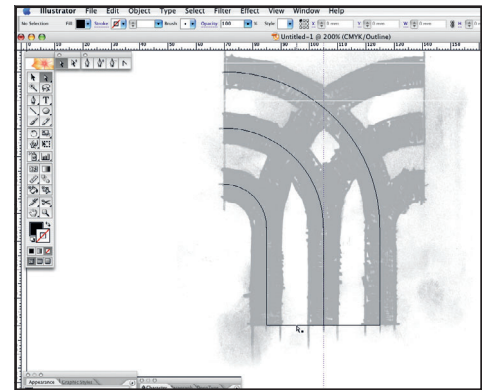
6 Next, extend the quarter circle. Select the Pen tool and hold it over the bottom point until a small slash appears next to it. Click once to start a new line, hold down Shift to make sure it's vertical and click again lower down to complete the arch.



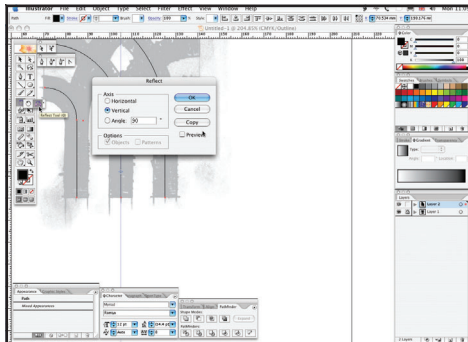
7 The arches in our design need to be perfectly and equally spaced, so we need to know the distance between them. Open the Info window (F8) then use the Measure tool to find out the distance between the centres of two arches. In our sketch, it's -20mm.



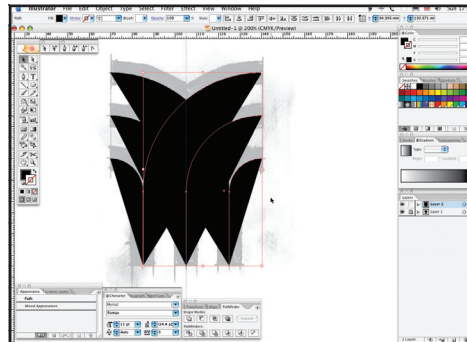
8 Now you need to make the two remaining left-hand arches. You could make copies of the first one and scale/reposition them, but that's far too inaccurate for us, so here's how we did it. Select your arch and choose Object>Path>Offset Path. Set the Offset to 20mm and hit OK.



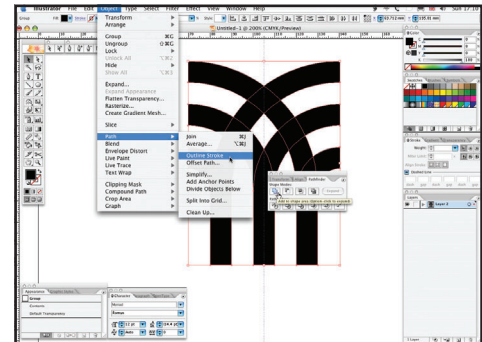
9 You should now have two new arches. The only snag is they're joined to form one shape. Use the Direct Selection tool (A) to select the unwanted lines and delete them. When you do this, select anywhere on the line and hit Delete, being careful not to select a point.



10 Now select all three arches, choose the Reflect tool (O) and zoom right into the centre of the middle arch. Hold down Alt or Option and click on the vertical part of the arch. Holding down Alt or Option opens the Reflect dialog window (the same for most tools). Choose Vertical and hit Copy.



11 Choose View>Outline to see what the logo really looks like. It won't look right because it's got a Fill rather than a Stroke. Remove the Fill and set the Stroke to 30pt (or experiment with your own weight). You can now ditch the layer that contains the original scan.



12 We'll leave our logo as individual elements so we can experiment with it later, but in most cases we'd combine them to form one shape and stop them from being changed. To do this, choose Path>Outline Stroke then choose Window>Pathfinder and select 'Add to shape area'.

Part 5: Choosing typefaces

There are an abundance of typefaces in the world, and you need to choose the right one...

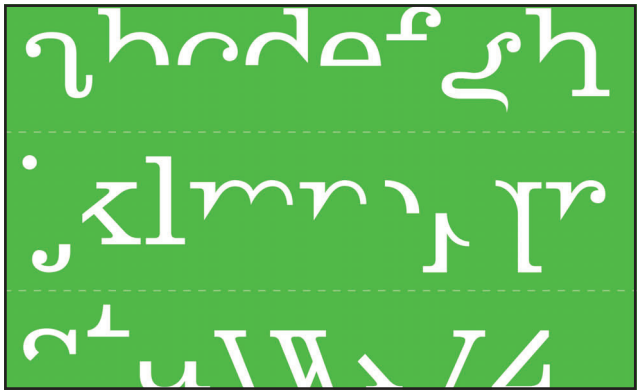
Timeless fonts

How often have you seen Helvetica used in modern, cutting-edge design? A lot, we'd wager. Max Miedinger created it back in 1951, and yet it's still popular today. Typefaces such as Helvetica, Frutiger (1952+) and Franklin Gothic (1903) are used every day and still look good. You can't go wrong with these sans serifs – they're timeless and they'll still look good in another 50 years' time.



1 If your logo consists of a symbol and text then consider using a clear and simple typeface that doesn't command too much attention. In this case, the symbol is usually the thing that you want people to remember the most. Typefaces such as Franklin Gothic are a good place to start.

2 If you create a custom typeface, try not to make it too fashionable because it could date quickly. Keep it simple and legible. Consider the words that you're depicting – if they're unusual then a simple typeface might work best; if they're common words then you can usually be more creative as they're easier to recognise.



3 Consider adapting an existing typeface. Removing, extending or joining parts of letters may be enough to make your design unique. It's amazing how little you need to see of some letters for you to still be able to recognise them. Check out this Fuse font called Can You (Read Me) to see what we mean.

Part 6: Creating a style guide

Put together a style guide to ensure the correct use of your logo...



1 Style guides determine the way a logo can be used and usually include colour options, size restraints, positioning, typefaces and how the logo works on different backgrounds. Check out www.channel4.com/styleguide for a great example of the sort of guide you should be aiming to set up.



2 Colours: A style guide should illustrate all possible colour options for a logo. It should include any Pantone colours used with a breakdown for CMYK and RGB. Other options to include are: colour and mono logos on white, colour and mono on black and colour and mono on an image background.

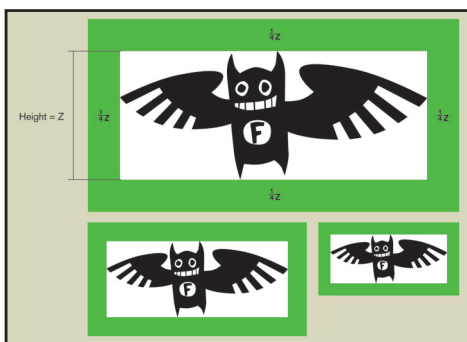


3 Size: Some logos only work down to a certain size. This might be because they become illegible or simply lose their impact. Specify the minimum size for your logo and bear in mind how it looks on screen as this may differ from a printed version. Offer an alternative in pixels.

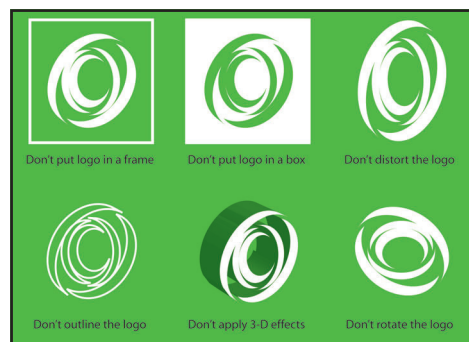
Creating a style guide continued...



4 Position: The positioning of your logo may not be required in a style guide, but depending on the style and shape of your design there may be a position that you think works best. For example, text that's ranged right might look best on the right-hand side of the page.



5 Space: Give consideration to the amount of space around a logo and try to explain this without using units of measurement. For example, the space below the logo should be a quarter of its width. This ensures that whatever size the logo is used at, the correct space can be calculated easily.

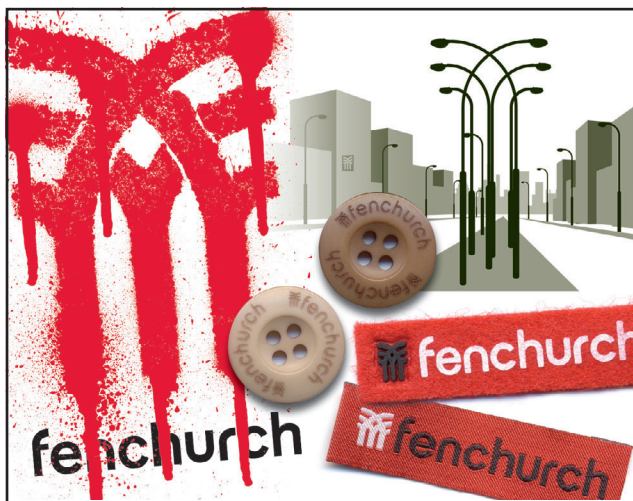


6 Misuse: If there are any ways that your logo should not be used then make sure you specify them. The main reason for a style guide is to ensure the appearance of your logo remains consistent, so explain how the logo should not be misinterpreted and illustrate your points with examples.

Part 7: Using logos

Here are some creative ways to experiment with a logo...

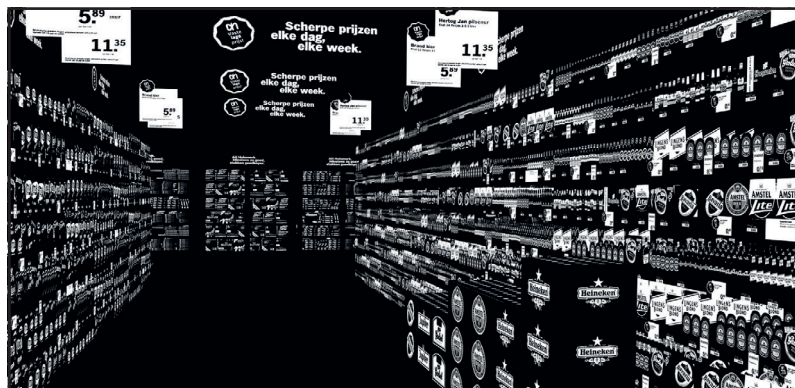
1 If you're lucky enough to do work for a company like Fenchurch then the amount of ways your logo will be used are endless. Experimenting with your logo could be the source of more work, so try offering new ideas to your clients, such as T-shirt designs, carrier bags and buttons.



2 Sometimes a client will ask you to design something, such as a brochure cover, but won't give you any imagery to work with. How can you make it look interesting? One way could be to experiment with the logo, by making repeat patterns or textures.



3 Using your logo for screen-based media extends the possibilities of experimentation enormously. Try animating your logos for website intro pages, Flash loading screens and screen savers. See what it looks like interlaced with moving images or in 3D, like this screen grab taken from the KAPITAAL typo-animation by Studio Smack.



Resources

Books: *Los Logos*, *Dos Logos* and *Tres Logos*, published by Die Gestalten Verlag, are great titles for inspiration. When looking through these books, remember the point made earlier about logos appearing one or two to the page — the volume of images in these books means that many ideas get lost and go unappreciated.

Downloads: For free *Illustrator* format logos, visit www.logotypes.ru, where you'll find most big brand trademarks.

Animation: Be sure to watch *KAPITAAL* at www.studiosmack.nl. It's amazing!

Expert profile: Mat Burhouse, Slingshot

Slingshot offers design, print and web solutions to a wide range of clients, including Fenchurch Clothing and *Graphotism* magazine...



Above: At 164 pages, *Graphotism* magazine is the world's biggest graffiti-art journal. As well as designing the last 11 issues of the mag, Slingshot has also built, and maintains, the magazine website.

BACKGROUND:

After studying general art and design at Stafford, Matt Burhouse went on to complete an HND in graphic design and advertising at Stockport College. He worked for design, advertising and marketing companies for about eight years before starting Slingshot in 2000. "I've always been interested in multimedia as well as design for print and now work on a wide variety of projects from logo design to web programming," says Mat.

YEARS AS A CREATIVE:

Fourteen.

FAVOURITE TOOLS:

Illustrator, *Flash* and a Rotring art pen.

CLIENTS:

Clients to date include Fenchurch Clothing, *Graphotism* magazine, Supergrass, Mint

Royale, A Third Foot Skateboards, Rick Myers and, more recently, several public sector organisations such as RegenVVM, South East Excellence and West Midlands Regional Assembly.

MISSION STATEMENT:

"Slingshot is a graphic design and web development agency. We aim to provide an honest and professional service. We believe our approachable manner leads to great working relationships. We aim to respond quickly and maintain good communications. We're passionate about our work," says Burhouse.

WEBSITE:

www.slingshot.co.uk



"We've always been into skateboarding so we love designing deck graphics. Here are two of our designs for the UK's only deck manufacturer, A Third Foot," says Burhouse.



Left: Slingshot's website. "We're just adding the finishing touches to our own website, where visitors can either enter the Flash animated 'Land of Slingshot' or view an HTML version that complies to W3C level AAA accessibility," says Mat Burhouse.