



Create a Silhouette Logo for a Steak House Restaurant in Adobe Illustrator

by Erik Ford · Blog · Tips & Tutorials · 9 Comments

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I find the task of creating logos to be both exciting and daunting at the same time. On the one hand, I relish the opportunities to create logos because I love helping companies discover and create their brand. On the other hand, I cringe at the idea because I know the journey that I am about to embark on will not be an easy one. There is no exact science that can be applied to the process. And, trust me, the process takes a bit of time from beginning to end. You may come up with 10 different concepts for a client and they may reject them all. Or, in some cases, you spend weeks on concepts and the client may decide the very first one you sent them a month ago is the direction they would like to explore. You never know and each situation will differ from the last.

There are three common mistakes that new designers will make when creating a logo that you **must** avoid at all costs...

1. The pencil and sketch pad is your best friend.

As a designer, you should **never** sit in front of a computer and try to create a logo. After you have spoken with your client at length, and done as much research as possible, your very first step should be to grab your pencil, sketch pad and sit down in a quiet room and allow ideas to come to you freely. Don't force the ideas to come. This will only further frustrate you in the end. Simply jot down what comes to your mind when you think of the industry that the logo will represent, the client's design brief and how to best visually represent the client. Remember, logos can be straight forward or metaphorical. Once you have some ideas on paper, take a few of the those rough sketches and flesh them out further in your sketch pad. Once you have three or four strong concepts, then sit in front of your computer and start to digitize those ideas.

2. Your work should be your own.

Your work should always be 100% custom made. You should **never** use stock clip art or vector work created by another designer for your logos. As I mentioned before, this is a process and you should not take the easy way out by using work that is not your own. And, trust me when I tell you, you will be learning something new every time you sit down and create a logo. So, roll up those sleeves and get ready for the heavy lifting.

3. Logos are vector artwork.

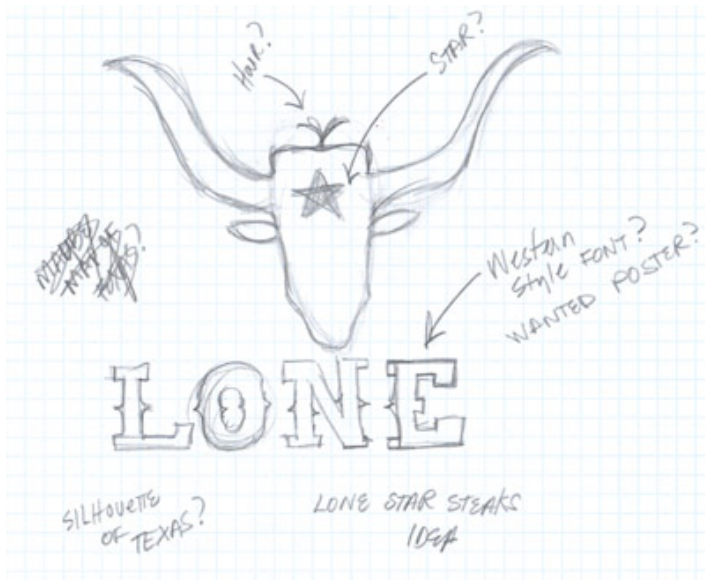
You should **never** create a logo mark that is intended for print in Adobe Photoshop. Doing so will make your work resolution dependent. All of your logo designs should be vector artwork and, therefore, not resolution dependent. I

cannot tell you how many times I have worked with clients in the past who have sent me a 72dpi image of their logo to be placed in a document for print and I would have to recreate their logo in a vector format. You can still provide your clients with screen versions of their logo from Adobe Illustrator. But, it is crucial that you provide them with a fully vectored version of their logo as well.

The Tutorial

** Please note that it has been pointed out to me that there is a restaurant named [Lone Star Steakhouse](#). My fictitious restaurant, Lone Star Steaks, used in this tutorial is in no means a direct attempt on my part to infringe upon the copyright or trademark of that restaurant.*

I am going to walk you through some of the steps of creating a logo, with a custom silhouette logo mark, for a fictitious steak house restaurant named “Lone Star Steaks”. I have already sketched out a few concepts and am settling on the one you see below. As you can tell, it is a pretty crude rendering. But this is only intended to give me points of references for the idea.



We are going to trace a picture of a “longhorn” using the Pen and Pathfinder Tools and we are going to slightly customize the free font, Saddlebag, for the type treatment. I could choose to trace my free hand sketch, but am opting to trace a photograph. Here is what you will need to complete this tutorial.

- Adobe Illustrator (preferably CS2 or CS3)
- Introductory knowledge of the Pen and Pathfinder Tools and bezier curves.
- Download the free font, [Saddlebag](#), from [dafont.com](#).
- Download a comp of a [Texas longhorn](#) from [istockphoto.com](#).

Let’s begin.

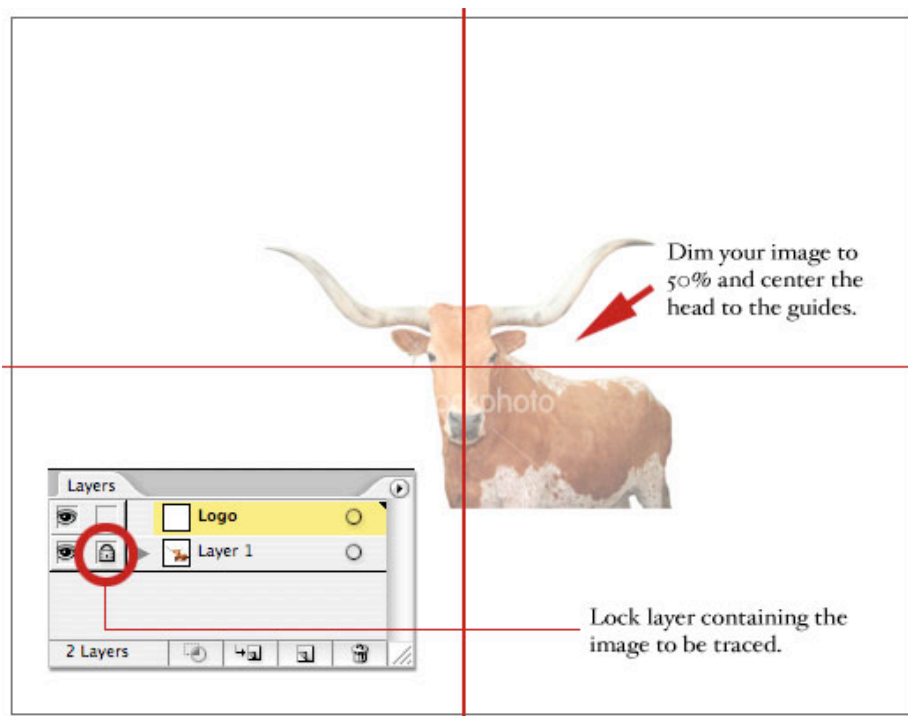
Step 1: Set up your document

I like to work with a large canvas when creating a logo, so I will start off with a RGB document that is 11 inches wide x 8.5 inches tall. I will also drag out two guides, center and then lock them on the Artboard. Optionally, you can turn on the rulers but they will not be necessary for this tutorial.



Next, I will place the above longhorn image, from [istockphoto.com](https://www.istockphoto.com), onto my Artboard as the perfect basis for my trace. *(Note: If this was a project I was working on for an actual client, I would legally purchase the rights to a high resolution copy of this image. The higher the resolution, the easier it will be for you to trace the object. This tutorial is not implicitly condoning theft.)*

From the **File** menu, choose **Place...** and navigate to where you saved the comp image and click **Place**. This will place the image in the center of your Artboard in Layer 1. Select the image and center the head of the longhorn with the guides. Double click Layer 1 to bring up the **Layer Options** palette window and select **Lock** and **Dim Images to: 50%**. Finally, create a new layer above Layer 1 and name it "Logo". This is the layer you will be creating your logo in. Your document should look like this:

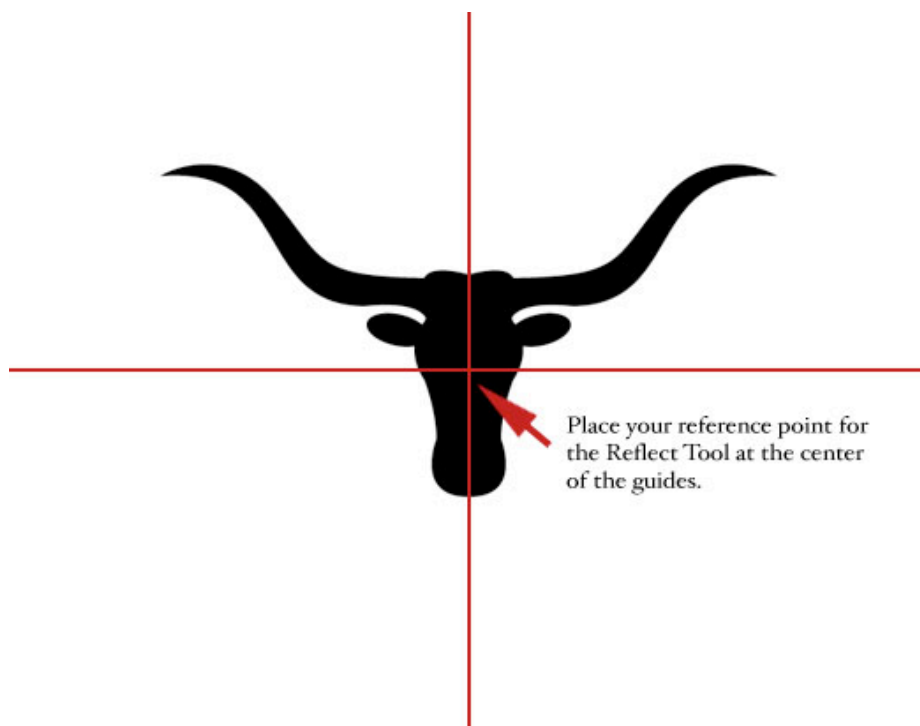


Step 2: Trace the image

You will probably have to repeat this step a few times to get it just right. If you run into any problems, simply undo your last steps and start over again. The **Pen Tool** takes hours of practice to master so, if you are new to the tool, don't allow yourself to get easily frustrated.

We only need to trace half of the head of the longhorn. Before you start your trace, select the **Zoom Tool** from the **Tools Palette** and zoom all the way into the image. Now select your Pen Tool and set the **Fill** to none and the **Stroke** to Black with a weight of .25px. We are going to trace in stages and, at the end, use the Pathfinder Tool to create the desired shape.

1. Remember that we only want to trace half of the head. With the Pen Tool selected, trace around the right of the head only beginning and ending the trace at the center guide.
2. For the right ear, select the Ellipse Tool and draw an oval over the ear. You may need to reposition the oval to fit nicely over the ear of the image.
3. Finally, trace the horn with the Pen Tool.
4. Select all three shapes. From your **Pathfinder Palette Window**, select **Add To Shape Area** and then **Expand**. You have now created half of the longhorn head.
5. Select your new shape and click on the **Reflect Tool** from the Tools Palette. Make a reference point at the center of the guides. Holding down both **Option** and **Shift** simultaneously, rotate and create a duplicate of the shape to form the left portion of the head. Once again, select both shapes and click Add To Shape Area – Expand. The head is complete.
6. Unlock Layer 1 and delete the photo. You no longer need it.



Step 3: Add type treatment

I have chosen to use the free font, Saddlebag, for this tutorial as it is closest to my hand drawn sketch and it will give my logo the overall Texas/Western theme I would like to achieve. Before we begin, make sure you lock the longhorn shape as we will be moving text around and want to keep the logo mark perfectly centered.

1. Select **Type Tool** from the Tools Palette and click anywhere on the Artboard.
2. Select “Saddlebag Black” from the **Character** drop down window and set the **Font Size** to 48pt.
3. With your Caps Lock on, type “LONE STAR”.
4. Select your newly typed text with your Selection Tool and align it to the center of the Artboard. Nudge the text so it sits below your logo mark. Make sure you leave enough room between the mark and your text. (*Note: I have done some kerning between the characters and this is an optional step.*) Deselect this text.
5. Select the Type Tool again and click anywhere on the Artboard. Change the Font Size to 65pt and type

“STEAKS”.

6. Once again, align this text to the center of the Artboard and nudge it below “Lone Star”.
7. Once you are pleased with your text placement, select both lines of texts individually and, from the **Type** menu option, select **Create Outlines**. *(Note: This will change your type into vector artwork and it will no longer be editable text.)*
8. Select both lines of text and, from the **Objects** menu option, select **Group**.

Now your logo is beginning to take shape. We are going to add a “star” to the center of the longhorn mark to further play up the Texas and Western themes. Select the Star Tool from the Tools Palette and set the Fill color to white and the Stroke to none. From the center guide, hold Option and Shift simultaneously to create a perfectly centered 5 point star. Once you are satisfied with the placement of the star, select it and the longhorn shape and group them together. *(Note: I have optionally created highlights for the ears that are not covered in, nor necessary for, this tutorial.)*



And there you have a custom created logo concept. Play around with this technique and see the endless possibilities you can come up with creating silhouettes using the Pen and Pathfinder Tools. If you are having difficulties with the Pen Tool, keep practicing. A lot of it really is trial by error.