

Logo design

Jacob Mesick



About the author

Jacob Mesick has been a CorelDRAW® user for many years. He is passionate about both traditional and digital art forms and works to discover new ways of combining these two creative areas. Having completed a bachelor's degree in computer arts from Memphis College of Art, Jacob is currently an IT Specialist for Royal American and enjoys freelance projects, which fuel his love for the visual arts. Among his many interests are digital photography, computer graphics, illustration, sign design, sketching, and painting.

I have always enjoyed the simple yet sophisticated world of logo design. The logo is a right-brained idea in a left-brained form. Some ideas come to mind quickly, without any effort, as if there could be no other choice — yet others elude us. The logo gives insight into what a company is all about and captures what people should know about the brand.

I originally designed the Crack Monkey logo for a class. I wanted to use parts of the same idea in another class, so I used the logo to represent a fictitious T-shirt company. Later on in life, I actually opened my own T-shirt business under this name (Figure 1).

In this tutorial, I show you the steps that went into creating the Crack Monkey logo, and I provide some tips for creating good logos.



Figure 1: Logo for T-shirt design business

Brainstorming for ideas

So how do you come up with great ideas for a logo? There are many ways to brainstorm. You can view logos made by other artists, browse through logo books, or look online. One of my favorite books for logo ideas is *Idea Index: Graphic Effects and Typographic Treatments* by Jim Krause (Cincinnati: F+W Publications, 2000). For a good online source, you can visit the Logo Lounge (www.logolounge.com). These and other sources can provide many wonderful ideas to inspire you.

You could also browse through your old sketches (Figure 2). I suggest carrying a sketchbook with you at all times. Draw as much as you can, even if your drawings are nonsensical. Draw everything, and keep your sketchbooks. Browsing through them later can help spark your creativity.



Figure 2: Rough sketches

Another brainstorming strategy is to make a mind map in the form of a bubble chart. Using bubble charts is a good way to start thinking about what you want to say about your company. Most people who chuckle at the Crack Monkey logo eventually ask the question, “What do monkeys have to do with buying T-shirts?” My answer is, “Everything.” I felt that a T-shirt company should be edgy yet bizarre, with a twist of crazy. How did I end up with a monkey? I started with a bubble chart.

A bubble chart begins with a central idea that is placed inside a bubble. Extending from this bubble are smaller bubbles, which contain related ideas (Figure 3). After you create a bubble chart, try combining some ideas from the outermost bubbles. Choose two unrelated ideas, and place them side by side. How do those two ideas together sound to you? What do they bring to mind? You can even use those ideas to start new bubble charts that have nothing to do with the first one. If you’re still having trouble coming up with ideas, try learning all you can about the words used on the outside of the bubble chart, and then begin drawing the shapes that come to mind. This process may not spark any ideas at first, but give it time.

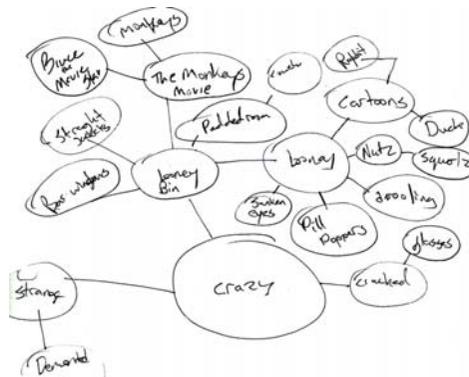


Figure 3: Bubble chart

By using this brainstorming method, your mind continues to work with various ideas throughout your day — for instance, just before you fall asleep or while you’re daydreaming on the way to work. Usually, the idea you’re looking for races to the surface of your mind when you least expect it.

A brilliant instructor I had for an illustration class used to tell us, “Make sure to draw at least 50 to 100 thumbnails before you start.” Although I believe that 100 thumbnails is excessive, I understand the importance of brainstorming. Don’t just settle for your first design — experiment, as I did for the Crack Monkey design (Figure 4). If you feel strongly about a particular idea, follow your instincts, and don’t be afraid to make bold statements in your art.



Figure 4: Experimenting with ideas from the bubble chart

Scanning the sketch

When you have some sketches that you like, choose the one that you want to use as a reference. In this case, I’ll use one of my Crack Monkey sketches (Figure 5). You can create a similar sketch and then follow along. Set the resolution of your scanner to 200–300 dpi (dots per inch), and scan the sketch in black and white for easier tracing.



Figure 5: Rough sketch for reference

Working with nodes

When you begin to create your logo, you will draw curves and reshape them by using nodes, so let's begin by learning a little about nodes.

In the toolbox, click the **Bézier** tool, and click on the page twice, from left to right, to create a line. The line has two nodes, one at each end (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Line created with the **Bézier** tool

Next, click the **Shape** tool in the toolbox, and double-click the middle of the line. Double-clicking adds a node. (Double-clicking an existing node deletes the node.) Right-click the new node, and choose **To curve**. This option creates two handles that you can drag to shape the curve between the middle node and one of the end nodes. Experiment with this option. If you convert the other end node in the same way, you'll have two more handles for shaping the curve (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Using control handles to create a curve

When you right-click a node, you can choose a node type: **Cusp**, **Smooth**, or **Symmetrical** (Figure 8). Each node type has its advantages, so experiment with each one.

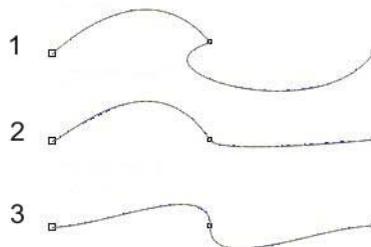


Figure 8: Three types of nodes: cusp (1), smooth (2), and symmetrical (3)

Setting up the document

Start a new CorelDRAW document by clicking **File ▶ New**. In the **Create a new document** dialog box, make sure that the **Size** list box is set to **Letter**.

If the **Object manager** docker is not displayed, click **Window ▶ Dockers ▶ Object manager**. In the **Object manager** docker, click the **New layer** button to create a new layer. Rename the new layer **Scanned image**, and drag it below **Layer 1**. Then, rename **Layer 1** to **Logo**. With the **Scanned image** layer selected, import your sketch.

It's a good idea to change the color of the black-and-white sketch — a trick that can help you later on when you trace the sketch. In the days before computers, artists would use cyan for sketching, because cyan is not reproduced when the drawing is copied or scanned. Drafters would draw the image in blue and then ink over the blue with black-ink pens of varying line weights. In a similar process, I change the color of my sketch to blue. When I trace with black on top of the blue, I can easily see which parts of the image have been traced. If you import a black-and-white bitmap into CorelDRAW, you can change the white portions by changing the fill color, and you can change the black portions by changing the outline color.

Finally, in the **Object manager** docker, click the printer and pencil icons next to the **Scanned image** layer. Clicking the printer icon turns off the printing of that layer, and clicking the pencil icon locks the layer and makes it uneditable (Figure 9). Select the **Logo** layer. You are now ready to begin!

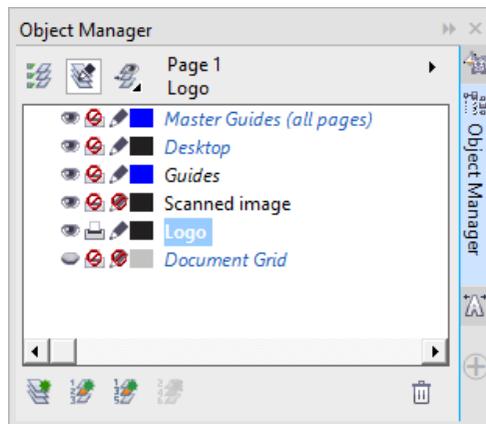


Figure 9: The **Object manager** docker identifies the **Logo** layer as the selected layer, and the **Scanned image** layer as locked for editing and printing.

Creating the eyes

Begin drawing the eyes of the Crack Monkey by drawing an ellipse with the **Ellipse** tool. Use the underlying sketch as a reference, and draw the ellipse around the eye. Don't worry about drawing perfectly, because you can edit the ellipse later. Use the **Pick** tool to position the ellipse (Figure 10).



Figure 10: Creating an ellipse over the blue sketch

To modify the ellipse with more precision, you must convert it to curves. Right-click the ellipse, and choose **Convert to curves**. Now the ellipse has four nodes: one at the top, one at the bottom, and one on each side. Double-click the ellipse to activate the **Shape** tool. Drag to create a selection box around the two side nodes (Figure 11).

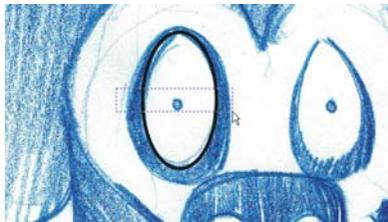


Figure 11: Selecting the two side nodes by using the **Shape** tool

Drag the nodes down to reshape the eye. When you are satisfied with the shape, click outside the nodes to deselect them. Then, select the top node of the ellipse, right-click the node, and make sure that the node is set to **Symmetrical**. With the top node selected, drag the control handles toward each other to narrow the top of the eye.

Next, you will create a duplicate of the eye. With the **Pick** tool, drag the eye to the left. Before releasing the mouse button, right-click once to make a copy of the eye (Figure 12).

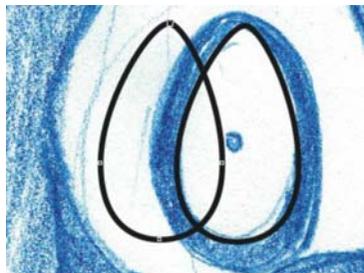


Figure 12: Duplicating the eye

The duplicate of the eye is on the topmost layer, but it must be moved to the layer below. You can easily see which object is on top by temporarily applying a different color to each object (Figure 13).

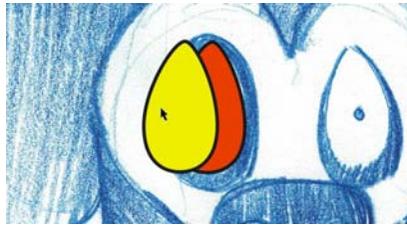


Figure 13: Using a different color to identify the top layer

In the **Object manager** docker, drag the duplicate object below the original one in the stacking order. Then, resize the duplicate, and reshape it to create the black outer ring around the eye. Next, create the tiny iris of the eye by making a perfect circle with the **Ellipse** tool while holding down **Ctrl**.

To create the second eye, drag and duplicate the completed right eye (on our left), and mirror the duplicated eye by clicking the **Mirror horizontally** button on the property bar. Reshape the duplicated eye as needed (Figure 14).



Figure 14: Creating the monkey's left eye (appearing on our right) by copying, mirroring, and reshaping the completed right eye (on our left)

Creating the nose and mouth

Now that you are more comfortable with editing nodes, you can create the nose of the Crack Monkey by using the **Bézier** tool. Although you can use the **Freehand** tool to draw the curves, the **Bézier** tool creates fewer nodes, which is better for creating simple shapes.

In the toolbox, click the **Bézier** tool. Using the sketch as a reference, click to place nodes along the shape of the nostrils. Do not be alarmed if the curve you create does not exactly follow the curve in the sketch (Figure 15).



Figure 15: The placement of nodes roughly follows the shape of the sketch.

With the nodes in place, you can reshape the curves. Make sure that the nose is selected. Using the **Shape** tool, drag a selection box around all the nodes. Right-click any of the nodes, and choose **To curve**. This option changes all selected nodes to cusp nodes. Use cusp nodes to create the three sharp corners at the bottom of the nose, and use smooth nodes to create the rest of the curves (Figure 16).



Figure 16: Using cusp and smooth nodes to shape the curves of the nostrils

Now that the nose is finished, try to create the mouth and the arch above the lips on your own. When you're done, click the eye icon next to the **Scanned image** layer in the **Object manager** docker to hide the blue sketch (Figure 17).



Figure 17: View of drawing with the sketch hidden

Creating the head and ears

You will create the head and ears without using the sketch as a reference. First, create a new layer, and name it **Head**. In the **Object manager** docker, click the eye icon next to the **Logo** layer to hide it, and make sure that the **Head** layer is selected.

Using the **Ellipse** tool, draw an ellipse, and reshape it into an oval for the head (Figure 18).

Duplicate the oval, scale the duplicated oval to make it smaller, and move the duplicated oval to the side of the original oval to create the monkey's right ear (on our left). Then, drag the right node to reshape the curve of the ear (Figure 19).

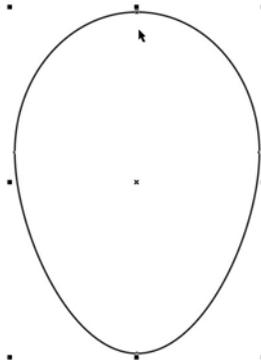


Figure 18: Ellipse for the head

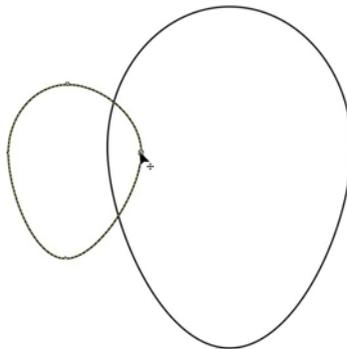


Figure 19: Resizing and reshaping the duplicated oval by dragging a node

Next, duplicate the ear by dragging it with the **Pick** tool and right-clicking. This time, hold down the **Shift** key while dragging to constrain the movement to the horizontal axis. Then, mirror the duplicate, as done earlier with the eyes, to create the second ear.

You can use guidelines to make sure that the second ear is the same distance from the center of the head as the first ear. First, make sure that the rulers are displayed, or click **View ▶ Rulers** to display them. Drag two guidelines from the vertical ruler: one along the inner edge of the monkey's right ear (on our left), and the other along the right edge of the head (on our left). With one

guideline selected, click the other guideline while holding the **Shift** key, so that both guidelines are selected (Figure 20). If you preserve the distance between the two guidelines, you can use them to align the right and left ears symmetrically, in which case, no measurements are needed. Drag both guidelines to the right, and right-click to duplicate them. Position the duplicates so that the right guideline is aligned with the edge of the head. Click **View ▶ Snap to ▶ Guidelines**, and drag the monkey's left ear so that its inner edge snaps to the left guideline. While dragging the ear, hold down **Ctrl** to constrain the movement to the horizontal axis (Figure 21).

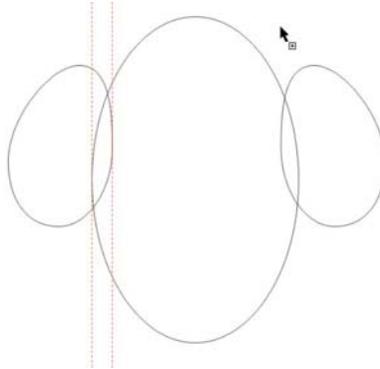


Figure 20: Selecting both guidelines

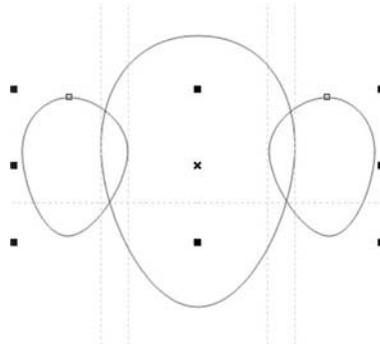


Figure 21: Duplicating the guidelines and aligning the ears

Finishing the logo

You are almost finished. Before you create the last piece, click the eye icon next to the **Scanned image** layer in the **Object manager** docker to display the blue sketch. Make sure that the **Head** layer is selected, and use the **Bézier** tool to trace the shape of the face (Figure 22). When you have a rough outline, hide the blue sketch to have a better view of the drawing (Figure 23). Finally, reshape the curve of the face (Figure 24).

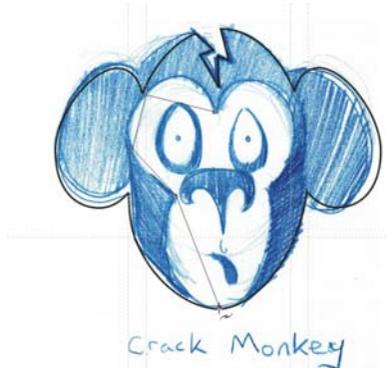


Figure 22: Tracing the face by using the **Bézier** tool

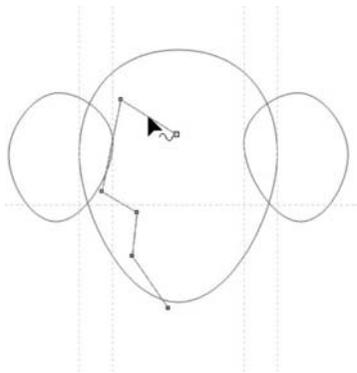


Figure 23: Rough outline of the face, with the sketch hidden

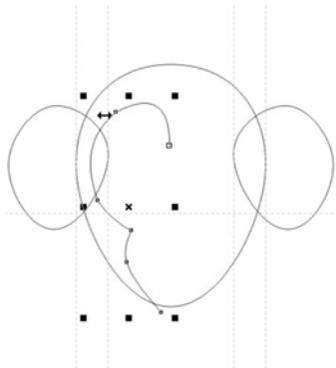


Figure 24: Reshaping the face curve

Next, duplicate and mirror the curve for the other side of the face. To ensure that the two parts of the face are symmetrical, you can place a guideline in the middle of the face. First, click **View ▶ Dynamic guides**. The dynamic guides are temporary guidelines that let you position and align

objects precisely. In this case, you will use dynamic guides to place a guideline through the center of the main ellipse. With the dynamic guides enabled, select the ellipse, and then drag a vertical guideline from the ruler to the middle of the face. While dragging the guideline, hover over the center of the ellipse until the word “Center” appears, and then release the mouse button. The guideline snaps to the middle of the face. Align the left and right curves of the face to the guideline.

Now, you will combine the two sides of the face. With the **Pick** tool, click the right side of the face. Holding down **Shift**, click the left side, so that both sides of the face are selected. Click **Object ▶ Combine** to combine the two curves. Next, you will connect the end nodes to create a closed shape. Double-click the curve with the **Pick** tool to activate the **Shape** tool. Drag the upper-left end node to the upper-right end node until an arrow appears next to the pointer. This arrow indicates that the two nodes will be joined when you release the mouse button. To connect the bottom nodes, use the **Bézier** tool. Hold the pointer over one of the end nodes, and click when an arrow appears next to the pointer. Then, hold the pointer over the other node until the arrow appears next to the pointer, and click to connect the two nodes (Figure 25).

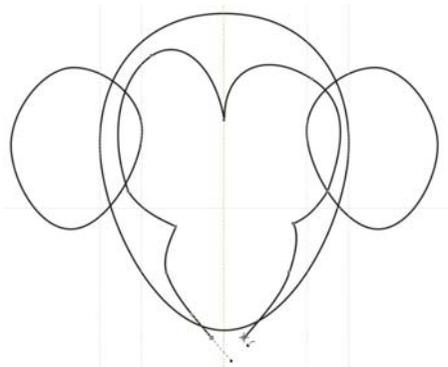


Figure 25: Connecting the end nodes by using the **Bézier** tool

Now you have four objects: head, left ear, right ear, and face. Next, you will combine the head and the ears into a single object. Holding down **Shift**, click the ears and the head to select them. Click **Object ▶ Shaping ▶ Weld** to combine the three pieces into one and remove the intersecting lines.

At this point, you can use the **Shape** tool to adjust the shape of the head and the ears. You may not like the shape of the ears, or the face may not be long enough. Make any adjustments you like, and don't be afraid to experiment.

Click a blank space in the window to deselect all objects. Using the **Pick** tool, select the face, hold down **Shift**, and click the head. Then, click **Object ▶ Shaping ▶ Trim** to cut out the shape of the face from the shape of the head.

The last element is the “crack” at the top of the monkey's head (Figure 26). You can create this element by using the **Bézier** tool. All components of the face have now been created. Just turn on the **Logo** layer in the **Object manager** docker, and you have the Crack Monkey logo!



Figure 26: Adding the “crack” element

Designing a box

Logos have many applications. For example, you can use the logo to create a box. When you follow the steps in this section, you’ll see that product design is not as difficult as you might think.

Take any cardboard box. Pull the box apart carefully, trying not to rip any of the flaps. Keep your tape measure handy, and take notes on how the product was assembled. Next, scan the inside of the box as a black-and-white image. Import the image on a separate layer, and change the color of the scanned box for easy reference.

Then, start tracing the box, this time using the **Rectangle** tool to create rectangles for the front, back, and sides of the box. Use the controls on the property bar to make sure that corresponding rectangles are the same size. Position the rectangles so that there is no space between them (Figure 27). Make sure that the **Snap to guidelines** option is enabled, and set up guidelines to mark the corners of the top flaps on the scanned box.

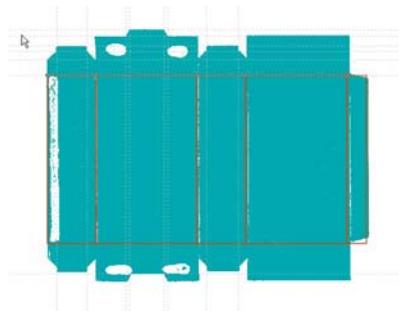


Figure 27: Scanned box, with rectangles drawn and guidelines added

When the shapes for the front, back, and sides are done, select all of them, duplicate them, and position the duplicates above the original rectangles, making sure that there is no space between the shapes. Resize the top rectangles so that they match the flaps of the scanned box.

To reshape the top rectangles, you must first convert them to curves. Select all of the top rectangles, right-click one of them, and choose **Convert to curves**. Each rectangle now has four nodes, one at each corner. Add nodes wherever you want to reshape the curves. Drag the nodes to the guidelines so that they snap into place (Figure 28).

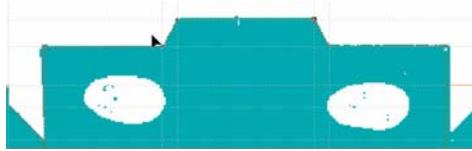


Figure 28: Dragging the nodes so that the curve follows the outline of the scanned box

After you have made the necessary adjustments, duplicate the top shapes to create the bottom ones (Figure 29). Then, mirror the bottom shapes, and hide the scanned image to see the final result (Figure 30).

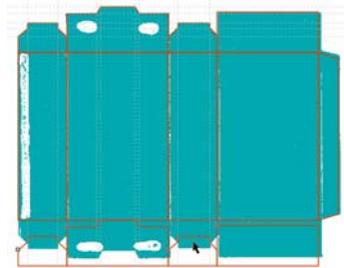


Figure 29: Duplicating the top shapes at the bottom

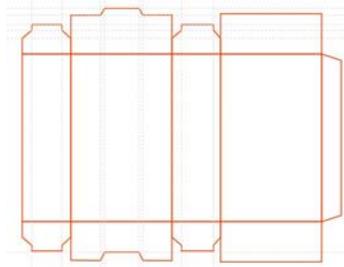


Figure 30: Final outline of the box

If you want to save the box as a template, remove the scanned image and the guidelines, and save the box as a CDT file.

Finally, apply color and text to the box, and add the logo design (Figure 31).

Creating a brand name

So where should you use your logo? That depends on how sophisticated your company is. Too much product placement can send the wrong signal. Using a logo wisely requires strategy and creativity.

For instance, for my Crack Monkey business, I created larger business cards so that my clients could not just slap the card in with their existing collection of business cards. The larger size forced them

to look at the card more closely than they normally would, simply because it was not the size they were used to handling.

I also put the logo on a bag, because that would be free mobile advertising wherever the bag went. I thought about what would best influence my clientele and found additional ways to use my logo (Figures 32 through 36).

Branding is important, because if you make a good product, people will buy other products from you based on your reputation. So think strategically when deciding how to use your logo. It will definitely pay off!



Figure 31: Final box with the logo



Figure 32: Billboard, boxes, and bags

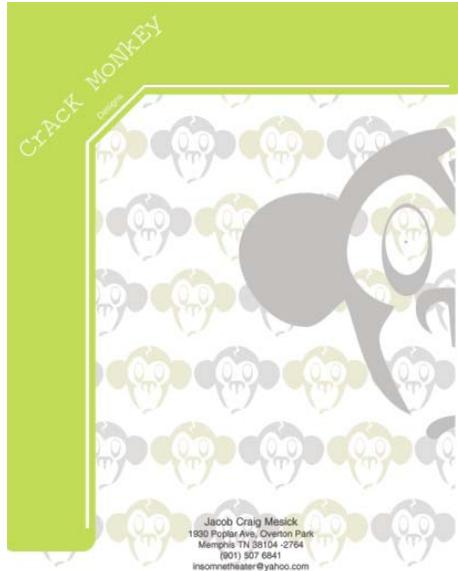


Figure 33: Letterhead



Figure 34: Envelope



Figure 35: Magazine ad

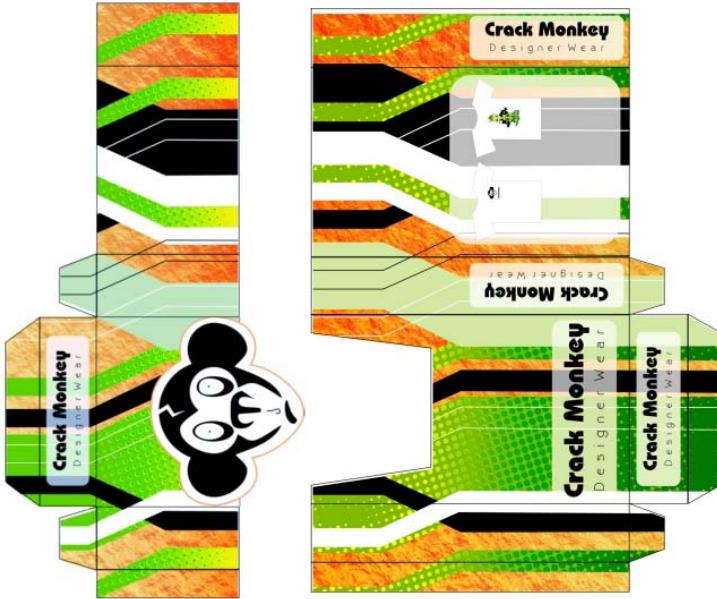


Figure 36: Box

Copyright © 2015 Corel Corporation. All rights reserved. All trademarks or registered trademarks are the property of their respective owners.