Monogram logo conveys character

Typestyle, color and a dash of flair say volumes about your company
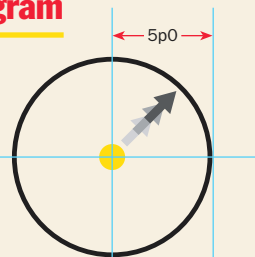

How to make a monogram

A monogram is part design, part mechanics. Follow us once through the procedure so you can quickly get on to the fun of making your own.

← 5p0 →

FREEHAND 3.1 SETUP
You'll be drawing a series of concentric circles. Before you begin, activate *Snap to guides* (from the *View menu*), then set Free-Hand's *Fill* to *None* and *Line* to *Hairline.* On the Layers palette move the *Guides* layer to the top.

1. DRAW A CIRCLE
Crisscross two ruler guides. Hold both *Option** and *Shift* keys, and with the ellipse tool draw a 5-pica-radius circle from the center out. Set its line weight to 0p3.
   Now start thinking about the image you want to send out. Is it sophisticated, casual, old reliable, sporty, futuristic? And what typeface expresses it best?

*Windows users: Substitute Alt for Option

5. BIND TO PATH, ADJUST
Turn *Preview* off. Select the name and circle you just drew, and *Join.* Call the *Element info* dialog; align the top arc using *Baseline* and the bottom arc using *Ascent.* Select *Edit Text.* To move the words so they touch the circle, highlight the lower line, select *Type specs* and adjust its position with *Baseline shift* . . .
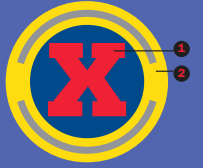
6. SPACE THE LETTERS
. . . (here 0p4.5). It may take a few tries. Now space the letters to wrap most of the way around the circle. To do this, select the circle, call the *Type specs* dialog, and enter a *Letter space* value; here it's 3-point. (To extend a too-short name, you might try adding a bullet between letters, or repeat the name, or use a more extended font.)

Historically, a monogram was a monarch's treasure—a hallmark bearing the most revered icon of all—the royal seal. It said little, but spoke with immediate recognition.
   A few centuries later, monograms still command attention. Sure, the royal seal is gone, but the monogram's simple, quiet elegance remains—the elegance of a name, an initial, and the visible voice of character.
   Our easy-to-make monogram wears all coats well. To make one, you'll draw a circle, an initial and a name. What's exciting are the endless ways in which typestyle, value and small embellishments can then be combined to convey exactly what you want. Dress them in the costume of royalty, and they speak of the privileged. Bathe them in a spotlight of smoky blue, and they fill the imagination with slow, swaying jazz. Center them on a stage of texture and accent, and they whisk us somewhere else. Here's how to do it:

2. SET YOUR INITIAL

Your initial is the focal point of the monogram, and it's fun to experiment with typestyles. What you are looking for is *expressiveness*—your choice may be ornate, blocky, rough, classic, bold, whatever. Pick one you like—we're using Snell Roundhand—and for now set it in 120-point.

3. CENTER AND SCALE

Center your letter by eye, not the text block indicators, and scale it to fill up the circle. Make it big; it's all right to touch or even overlap the circle like we've done here. At this point it's hard to tell what will look best, so just get it in the ballpark and we'll fine-tune it later.

4. SET YOUR NAME

Type the company name in 16-point (for now) centered, in all caps. Insert a return where you want it to split into two arcs. (If your name is short, try setting it twice.) Since it's much smaller, the font should not be ornate or detailed; ours is Charlemagne. To form a circular path for the name, draw a 5p6-radius circle.

BALLESTRINI
VINEYARDS

7. ADD AN OUTER CIRCLE

Turn *Preview* back on. Draw the outer circle the size shown so the type is spaced evenly between the circles. *Send to back.*

Before moving on, take a look at the whole thing; you'll now have a better idea if the type is the size you want, if the spacing pleases you, and so on. Adjust.

8. COLOR

Monograms look great in just one or two colors. Pick a deep, rich main color—burgundy, grape, midnight blue, forest green, charcoal. The second color, if you use one, should be light: a pale screen of the first color, a neutral cream or gray, or a complement. Here, the inner circle is a tint of the outer. White type gives the illusion of three colors.

9. EMBELLISH

Lines, texture and pattern can help to symbolize the company's business. Use them to conjure up mental pictures. Here, horizontal lines bring to mind old engravings, or are perhaps reminiscent of the grain in the wood barrels, and turn the monogram into a wine label. Old-world dingbats fill space artfully, easing the "jump" between words.

Background color: C3 M3 Y12

Background color: C31 M40
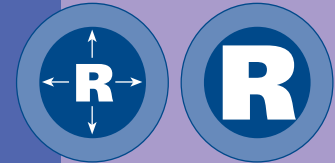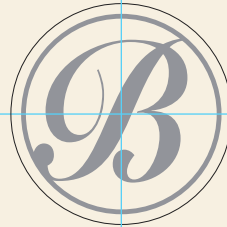

Artistic guidelines

Proportions

A monogram is like a target: the eye is drawn to the center, then led outward, because its elements are scaled from large to small. How large should they be? How small?

The initial
Fill up the circle

For your initial, pick a typestyle that's as wide as it is tall. You want it to fill the space and look substantial and secure, not to float or appear weak. Steer clear of condensed or extended typefaces, which in a circle leave big gaps.

The name
Set it midsize

As a rule, your circular type should be one-seventh the size of the initial. For "period" designs and other special pieces you might try it larger (right), but go easy; too big and it tends to compete. Too small and it's unreadable.

Background color: C70 M67

Lines

Line weight should be no heavier than the initial, and preferably lighter.

This: *not this:*

Type

Typestyle is the costume your initial wears to express your company's character: playful, stately, flamboyant, *confident.* Use the visual language of type to convey your company's spirit:

The initial
Make it expressive

For bright results quickly, start with decorative headline fonts. Look first for something energetic, blocky and bold, or ornate. Sometimes a solution is obvious: a swashy script initial, say, for a fancy hotel. But try everything; chances are you'll be surprised by interesting results from some unlikely choices. Is your type library tiny? This is one time it doesn't matter; since you need only one letter, thumb through the thousands in a type catalog, then scan and trace your selection (right).
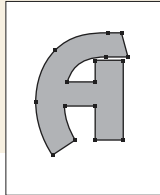
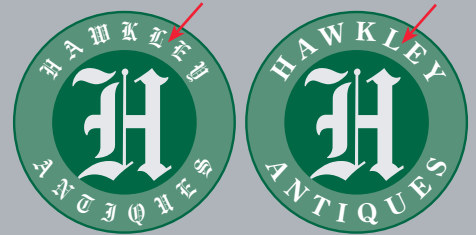### The circular name
Start with the same typeface

Try first setting the circular name and initial in the same typeface; this establishes immediate uniformity and is often the strongest choice. Always set the circular name in uppercase; the up-and-down shapes of lowercase make for an uneven, weak appearance (right).

WORKING BASIC
The basics are sometimes ideal and always worth a look. This logo (left) is set in Palatino, a standard laser font.

Background color: C26 M20 Y20

MAKE SURE IT'S READABLE
If your initial typestyle is elaborate, you'll need to set the circular name in a different, simpler font. Look for contrasts. Try serif/san-serif, script/serif, or bold/light combinations. Keep in mind that your choice must be easy to read at small sizes.

NAME UNEVEN? TOO SHORT?
Words of uneven lengths, such as Laurelwood Books (below) can be set in uniform letterspacing (1) or uneven (2). Set a too-short name twice (Zorro pizza, left), or three or even four times (Al Dente, right).
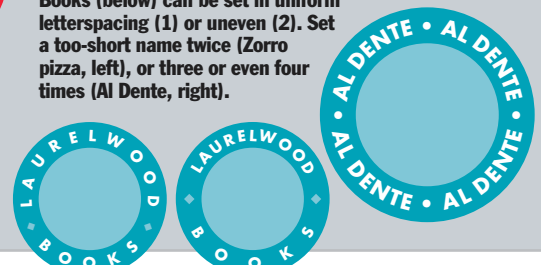
1 uniform   2 uneven

Color

Monograms look unusually good in black & white, but it's color that draws attention and expresses character more than any other element. Color is why, as you read this text, you can feel the pull of Zorro's solid red pizza box (above). Color can also affiliate a monogram with a nationality, school, sports team, and so forth.

Background color: C6 M10

USE SOLID COLOR FOR BOLDNESS
Bright, solid color without screens has the broadest range of use. Ideal when printing uncoated paper where screens could easily plug.

Tints
Tints make the most of one color

Tints soften and give dimension to one-color logos. Since tint values are most obvious in shades of gray, work in black & white first. Alternate values from the center out: dark, light, dark, light (right), then apply those same values to a dark color (far right).

Color chart: Top logo: White initial, 100% inner circle, 40% line, 60% outer circle, 10% type. Purple: C30 M100 K30. **Middle logo:** 90% initial, 55% inner circle, 75% line, 35% outer circle, 75% type. Green: C100 Y85 K36. **Bottom logo:** 80% initial, 40% inner circle, 80% line, 60% outer circle, 20% type. Blue: C100 M40 K36.

Two colors
A dark color for body, a light color for accent

Monograms are beautiful in two colors. To find the most expressive ones it will help to browse FreeHand's color libraries. Look first at burgundies, grapes, midnight blues, forest greens, charcoals. The most vivid monograms are predominantly dark. Select a light second color for *accent*—a pale screen of the first color, creams, grays or complements. As a rule, avoid making the light color dominant, which weakens the effect (right).
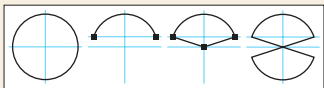
Graphic devices

Use line, texture and pattern to help symbolize your company's business. Techniques:

HOW TO MAKE A NOTCH
Draw a circle. Drag a guide to mark the edge of notch. With the knife, cut away circle. Make arc into a pie shape as shown. *Clone*. *Reflect* clone 180 degrees from the center.
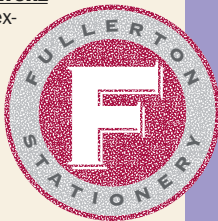
HOW TO DRAW CONCENTRIC CIRCLES
Draw just the inner and outer circles. *Ungroup*. Apply desired line weight; *Blend* in as many steps as you want lines. Works with straight lines too!
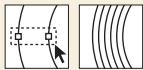
CUSTOM FILLS ADD TEXTURE
FreeHand's custom textured fills are yummy, especially in tints or colors. Fine textures are preferable to coarse ones. Avoid *patterned* fills, which do not scale.

HOW TO MAKE BICOLORED CIRCLES
Draw a circle. Bisect with an overlapping rectangle. *Cut* the rectangle, select the circle and *Paste inside*. Note, above, the outer circle is divided horizontally.

Background color: C34 M40

How to design monogram stationery

Monograms make outstanding stationery. Compact, elegant and useful, monogram stationery conveys more than just your name—it speaks with distinction. A basic business "system" is composed of business cards, letterhead and #10 envelopes. The design shown here is especially versatile, its tasteful suit-and-tie treatment suitable for any occasion:

Mr. Steven Estes
Port Authority
621 Harbor Blvd
Nantucket, MA 02554

Dear Mr. Estes:

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipscing elit, diam nonnumy eiusmod tempor incidunt ut labore et dolore magna aliquam erat volupat. Ut enim ad minimim veniami quis nostrud exercitation ullamcorper suscipit laboris nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum irure dolor in reprehenderit.

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Sincerely,

Jerry Hignight

36 GLEN COVE WAY, NANTUCKET, MA 02554 • 508 555-5555

DESIGN YOUR BUSINESS CARD FIRST
Because it's smallest, everything has to fit here. Design it first, then . . .

COPY THE LAYOUT
Use the same layout—size, arrangement, everything—for letterhead and envelope. Exception: Letterhead address moves to bottom.

Letterhead margins
Top: **16p**, Bottom: **9p**, Left: **10p6**, Right: **10p6**

Monogram: 2p9 diameter

Rules: Align vertically with company name

Company: 9-point

Individual: 7-point

Title, address: 7-point, new font

Address rule: Aligns to longest line of type

MATCH THE TYPESTYLE
Your primary stationery font should match the monogram's initial unless it's too ornate, in which case it should match the circular type.

REPEAT THE NAME
Although it's part of the monogram, always repeat your company name on the stationery.

NANTUCKET YACHT CLUB
JERRY HIGNIGHT
COMMODORE
36 GLEN COVE WAY, NANTUCKET, MA 02554 • 508 555-5555