Illustration

Style Guide 2017

Why Illustration?

Illustration is becoming an integral part of the way we communicate with travellers.

We use illustrations to better explain complex ideas, express our personality as a company and celebrate the features we provide in a creative way.

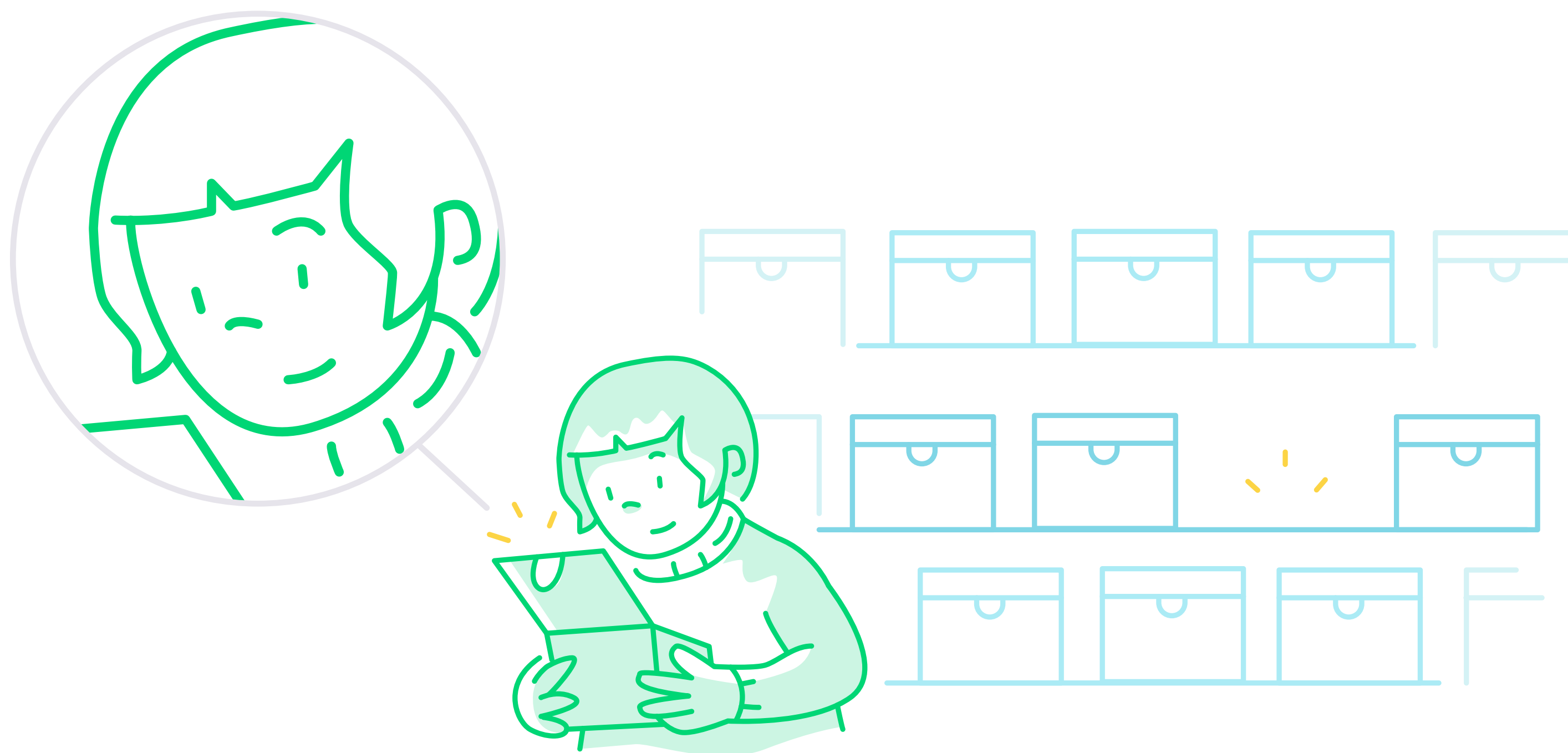What makes a Skyscanner Illustration?

| Consistent Stroke Weight | Organic Strokes | Non-intersecting Paths | Accents of Colour | Diversity of Colour | Shadow / Shape |

Consistency in Stroke Weight helps to ensure that our illustrations contain little visual noise or details which get lost at smaller sizes.

Use your discretion but ensure that when creating a single series of illustrations that they share the same Stroke Weight.

What makes a Skyscanner Illustration?

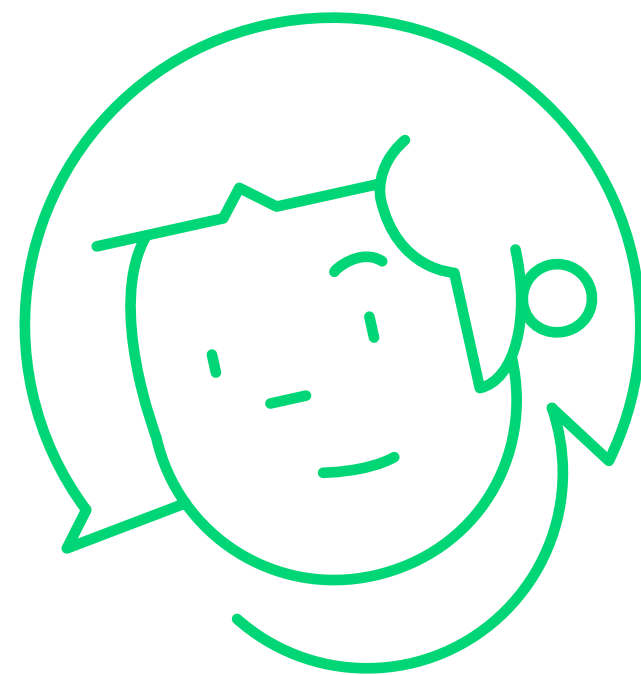| Consistent Stroke Weight | Organic Strokes | Non-intersecting Paths | Accents of Colour | Diversity of Colour | Shadow / Shape |

Illustration created with Adobe Illustrator shape tools.

Clunky, inorganic and lifeless.

Adobe Illustrator affords us the opportunity to create complex shapes easily, however wherever possible we should still be creating our shapes using the pen-tool by hand.

The results are less than perfect but that is what gives our lines an organic look, a sense of life!

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We employ a technique of non-intersecting paths at points in our illustrations where we requires less rigidity.

We use this technique to open up an illustration, to suggest light sources and suggest motion or distance.

This is the most abstract part of our style and good placement of this technique will come with practice.
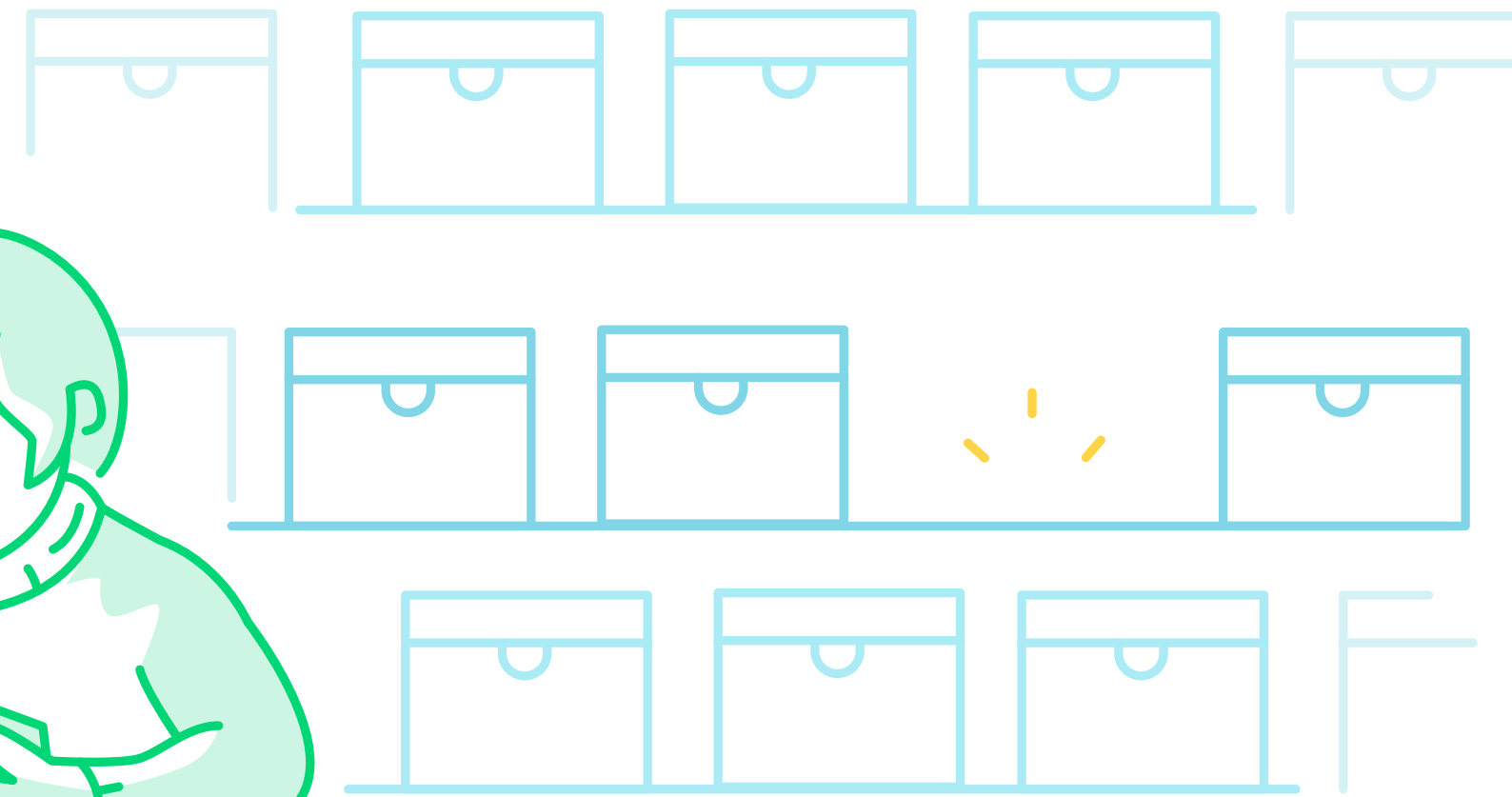
Example: The paths around the collar of the subject do not intersect.

The gaps between the lines help to emphasise the light source coming from the box.

What makes a Skyscanner Illustration?

Consistent Stroke Weight	Organic Strokes	Non-intersecting Paths	Accents of Colour	Diversity of Colour	Shadow / Shape

Surprise!

Draw Attention

We use accents (like the yellow ones in our example) to convey many things.

Accents can be used to emphasise surprise, laughter, wonder or draw attention etc.

It's also a great opportunity to drop in an extra splash of colour if your illustration needs it.

What makes a Skyscanner Illustration?

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Tones lighten to 'fade out' without gradient overlay

Stronger colours on subject to pull focus

Colour can be used sparingly but to great effect.

We can use differences in colour to emphasise distance or draw attention to a foreground object.

In this example we focus immediately on the stronger foreground colours while the cooler , lighter tones of the background fill in the rest of the story.

What makes a Skyscanner Illustration?

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Shadow tone should be the same colour as stroke with reduced opacity

Shadow tone works with non-intersecting lines to create light coming from inside the box

Always consider light sources when planning an illustration

You should avoid using fills heavily in your illustrations.

If it serves the story of the illustration or can raise the quality of an image, use a lighter tone to accentuate a sense of weight or form.

Ensure your shadow areas are the same colour as your subject.

What makes a Skyscanner Illustration?

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Making a Skyscanner Illustration

| Consistent Stroke Weight | Organic Strokes | Non-intersecting Paths | Accents of Colour | Diversity of Colour | Shadow / Shape |

The Brief

There are times where you might receive a rigid, prescribed brief such as '*draw me Object A*' but it's always worth considering if *Object A* is the best way to convey the story we want the illustration to tell.

Inspiration vs. Information

Think about where the illustration will be placed. Who is the audience? Is the illustration doing the heavy lifting to convey the message, or is it simply there to reinforce it?

Even in smaller, more information-led pieces our style can still shine.

It's here where we make the decision on where to go from information-led imagery to inspirational imagery.

Information

These are always much more straight-forward. All we're concerned with here is getting a fact or number across to the Traveller with as little visual information as possible.

Inspiration

Generally, this is the fun stuff. These have a dual-purpose to inform and entertain. There is more scope here to show our personality.

Creation

The illustration process can be different from person to person.

Some might dive into the digital creation process immediately while others will prefer to sketch out their ideas on paper first.

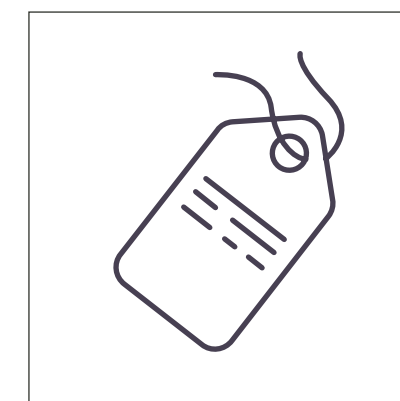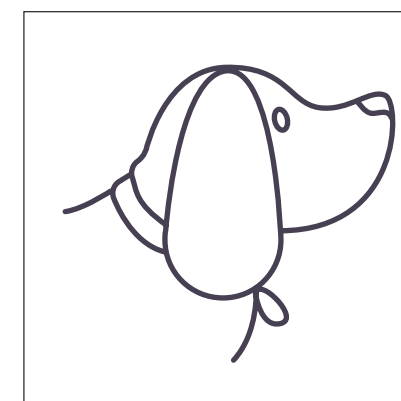However you proceed, be sure to consider all the elements which make up a Skyscanner illustration.

When creating a more information-led piece, it's important that every stroke counts.

Try and use as little visual information as possible to get your point across.

150px

150px

We rely on simple, clean lines but that doesn't mean that our illustrations are straight-forward.

These illustrations are generally viewed at a much smaller size so keep it simple.

To keep the balance between simplicity and tailored narrative, all spot-illustrations should be created in Illustrator within a **150x150 Artboard** - with a **2pt** Stroke.

At this size, every line needs to justify its existence.

Creation

The majority of Skyscanner Illustration is created in Adobe Illustrator.

Vector Strokes are made with the **Pen Tool** which allows deft control of anchor points, meaning making tweaks to your lines is simple.

The first step of the creation process should be deciding on a theme and composition.

Sketching out your ideas and choosing from multiple sources can really help to nail the emotions you're trying to convey.

Once your sketch is imported to illustrator (something as easy as taking a photo with your phone)

Vector Strokes

Initial Sketch

Block colours in separate layer beneath stokes

Final Illustration

Creation

Inspiration pieces needn't have such restrictions but it is still important to keep things as simple as possible.

Any elements which detract from the message of the piece should be considered for removal.

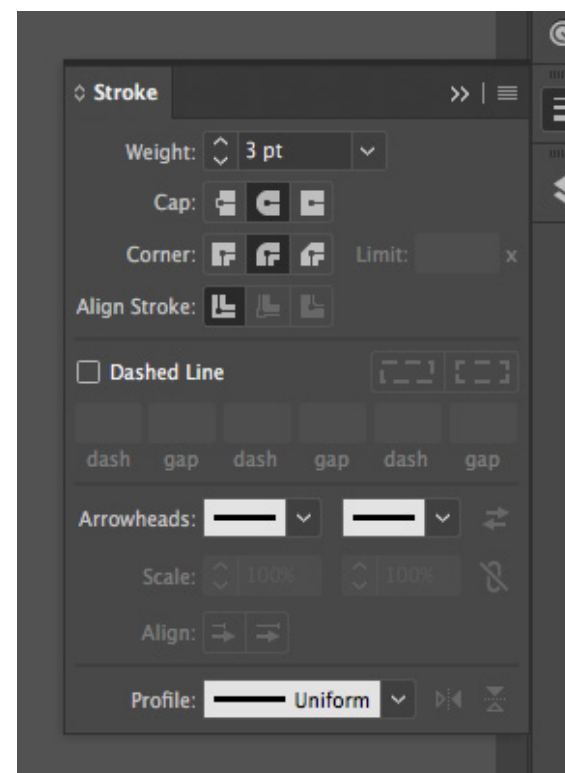**Diversity of Colour**

Organic Strokes

Accents of Colour

Non-intersecting Paths

Consistent Stroke Weight

Shadow / Shape
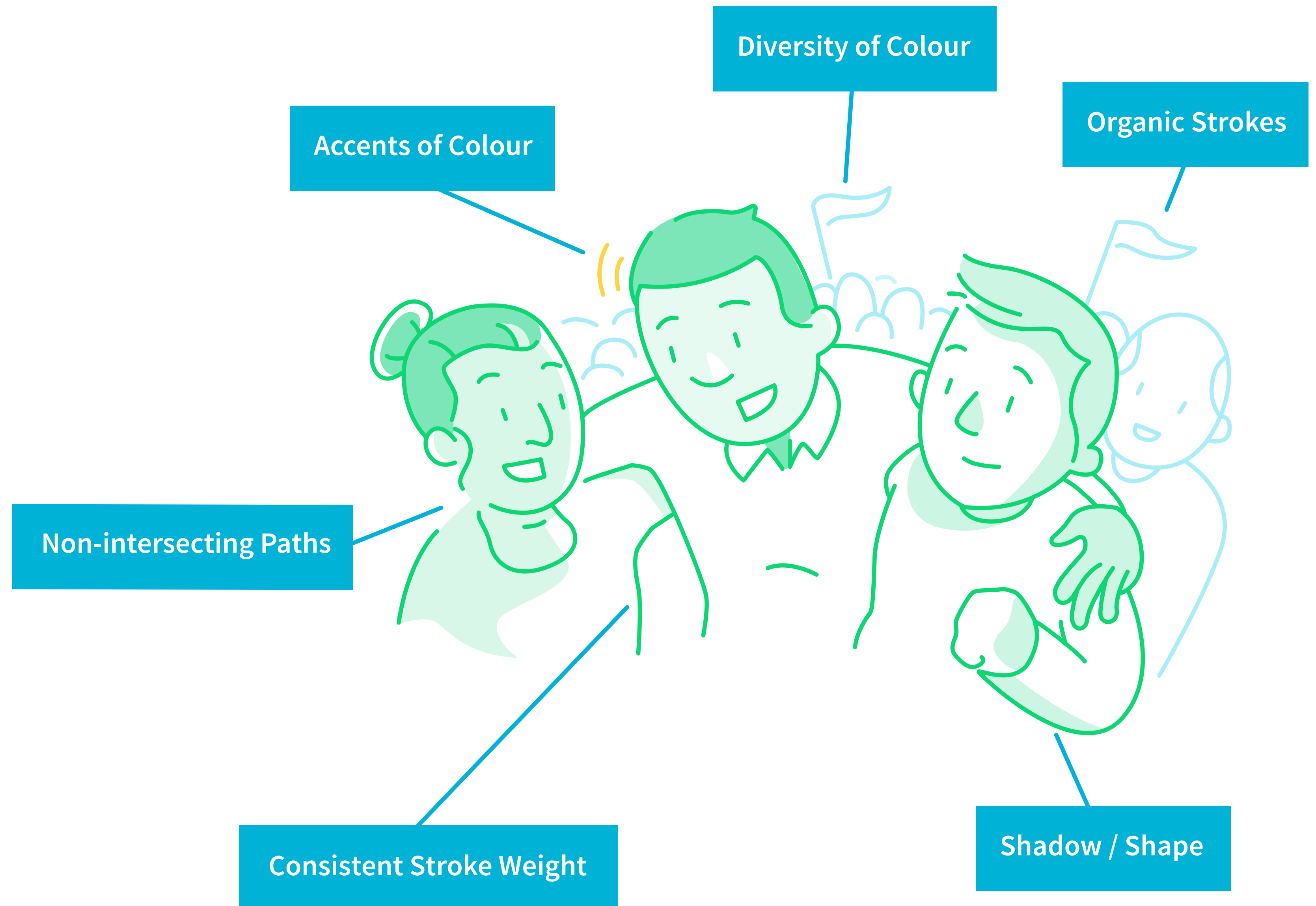
Creation

All Strokes should all have rounded Caps and rounded Corner joins.

Butt-Cap and Mitre Join

Round Cap and Round Join

Illustrator Setup

❌ Butt-Cap and Mitre Join

✅ Round-Cap and Join
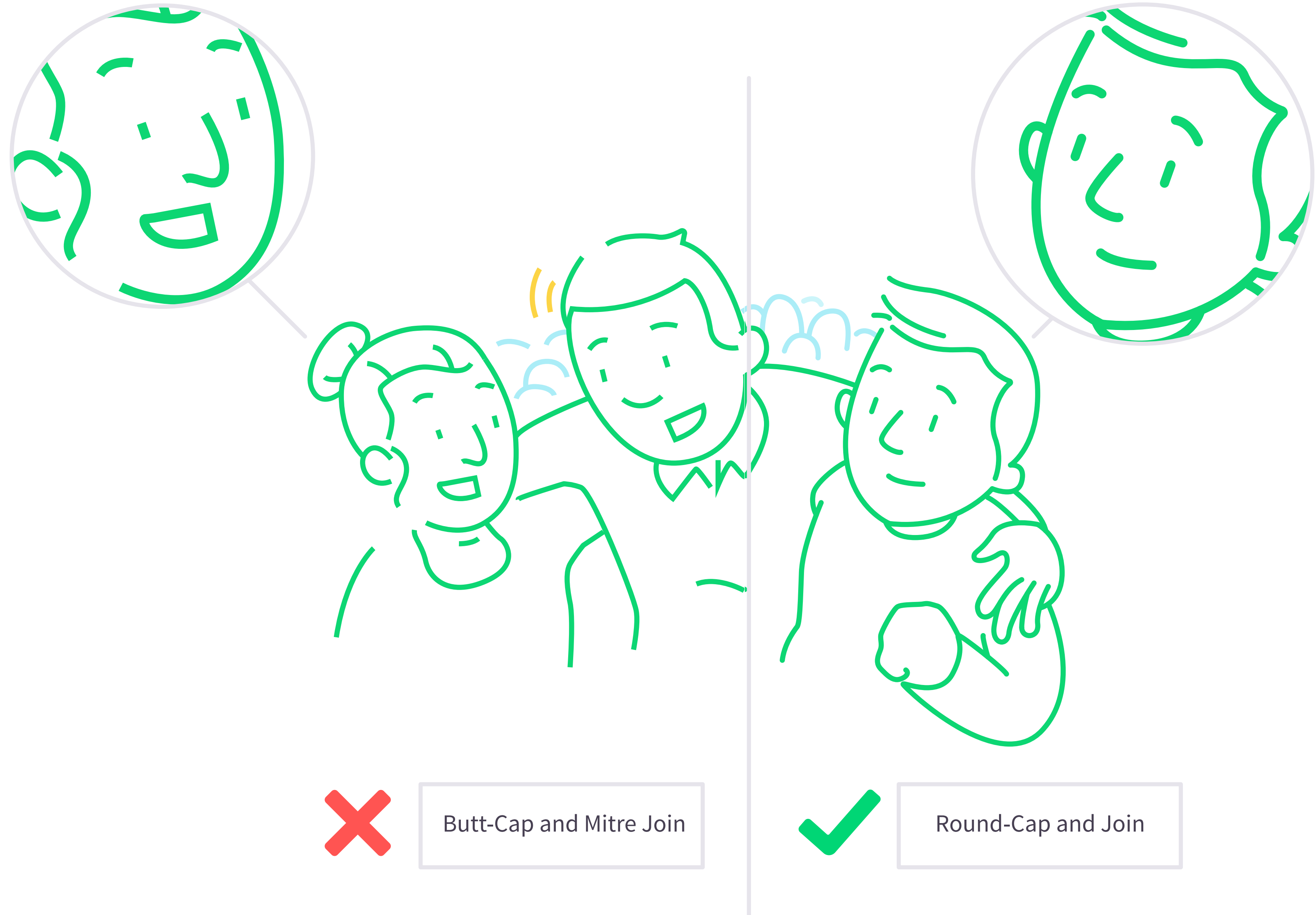
Creation

When using the non-intersecting paths technique, make sure to leave ample space between paths.

We do this to avoid as many tangents as possible but also to ensure the image is cleaner when reduced in size.

Try and leave at least a stroke width between gaps.

In the example the stroke width is 3px so try and make sure your gaps are at least as thick.

3px

3px

A good way to check if your gaps are big enough is to simply draw a line through them.

Creation

Colour can be used to effectively define shape, add weight or simply create more visual appeal in your illustration.

Colour choice is at your discretion but a maximum of three colours (not including tints for shadows) should be considered.

If using dark strokes, do not use a full black - use one of the dark greys from the Skyscanner Palette.
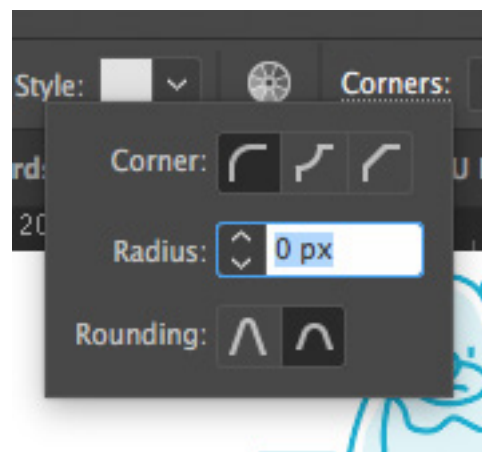
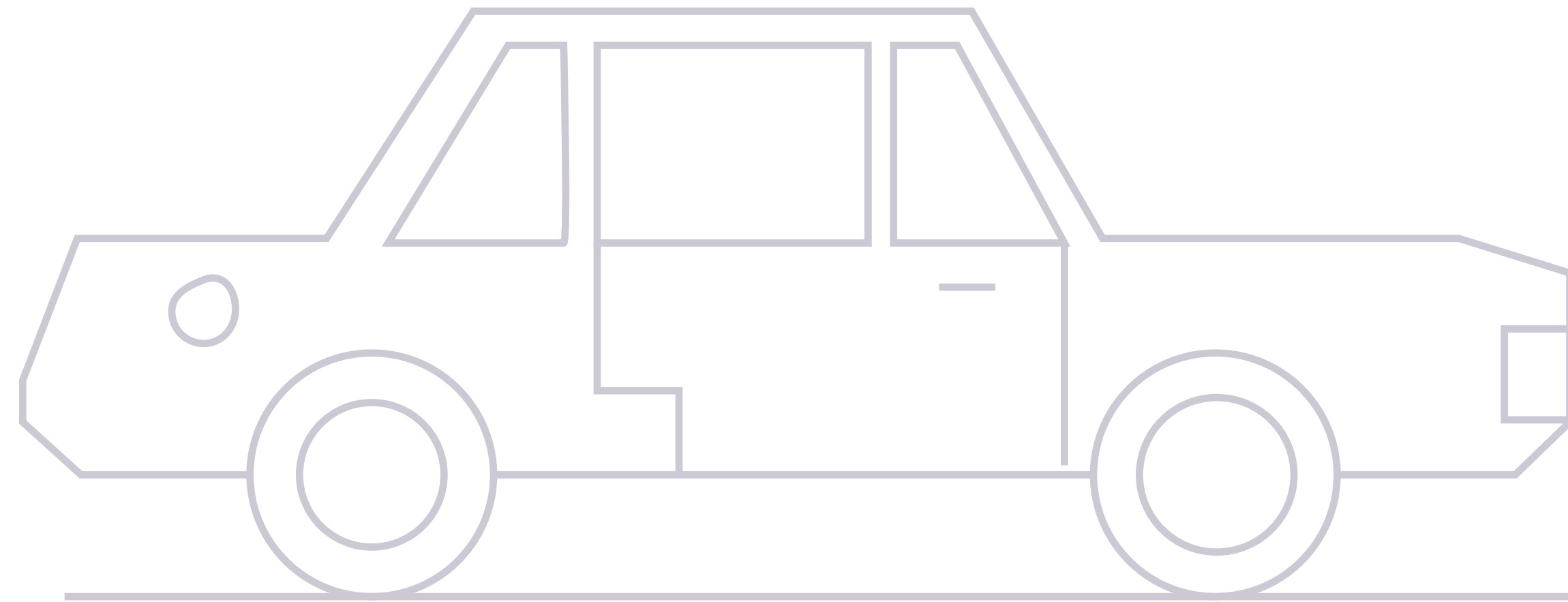These images are strong examples of the Skyscanner illustration style.
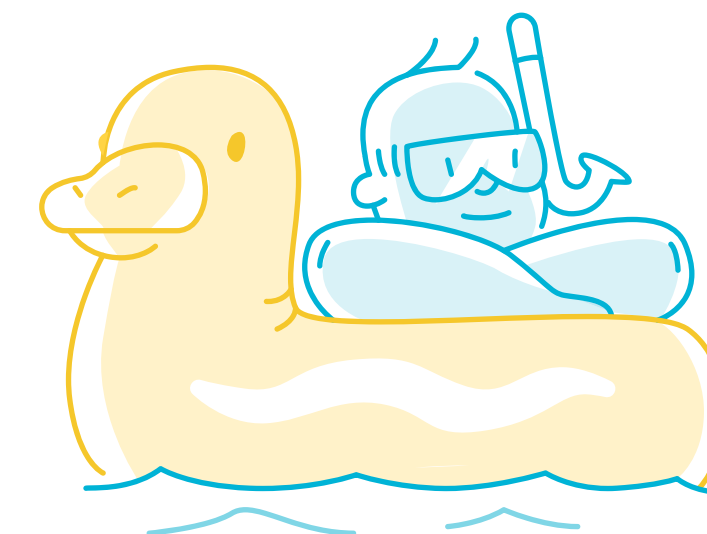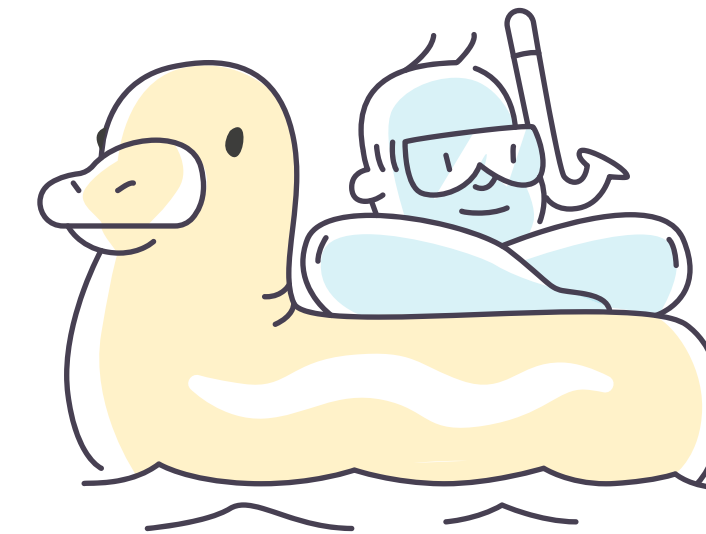
Creation

Rounded Corners can also help to add a softer appeal to illustrations.
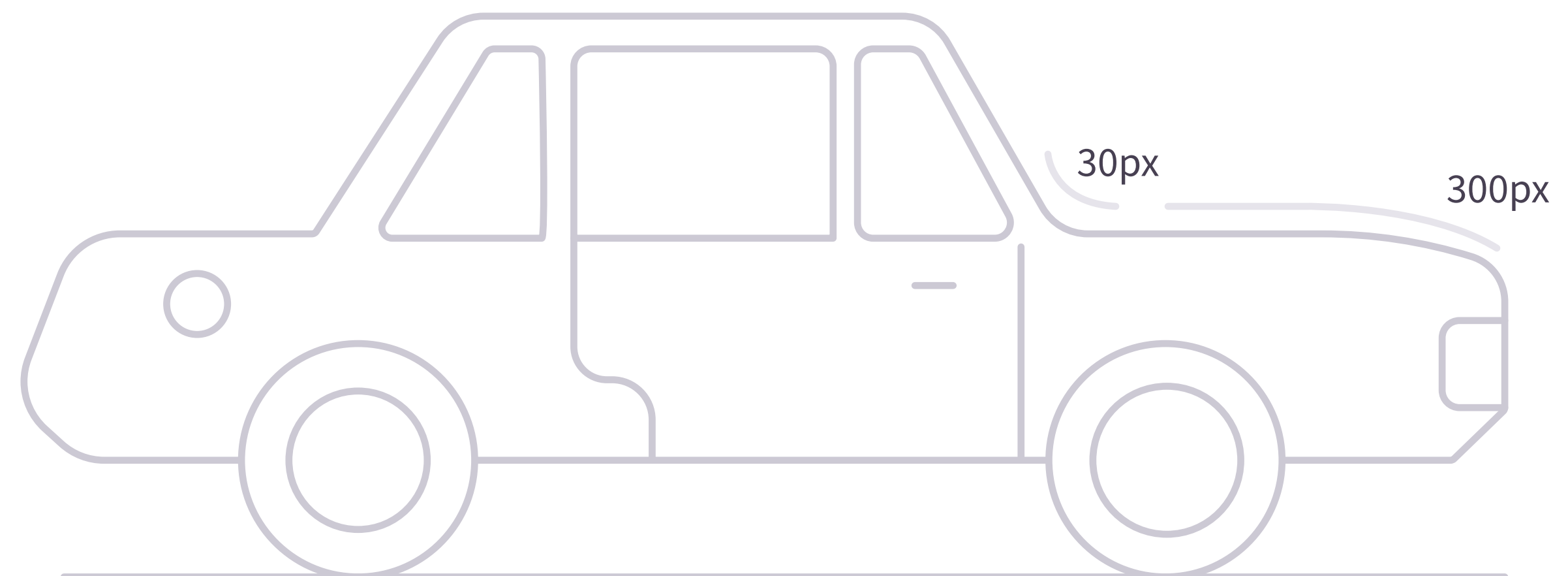
While we're looking for organic lines, playing with the radius on anchors can stop an image looking messy or overly rigid.
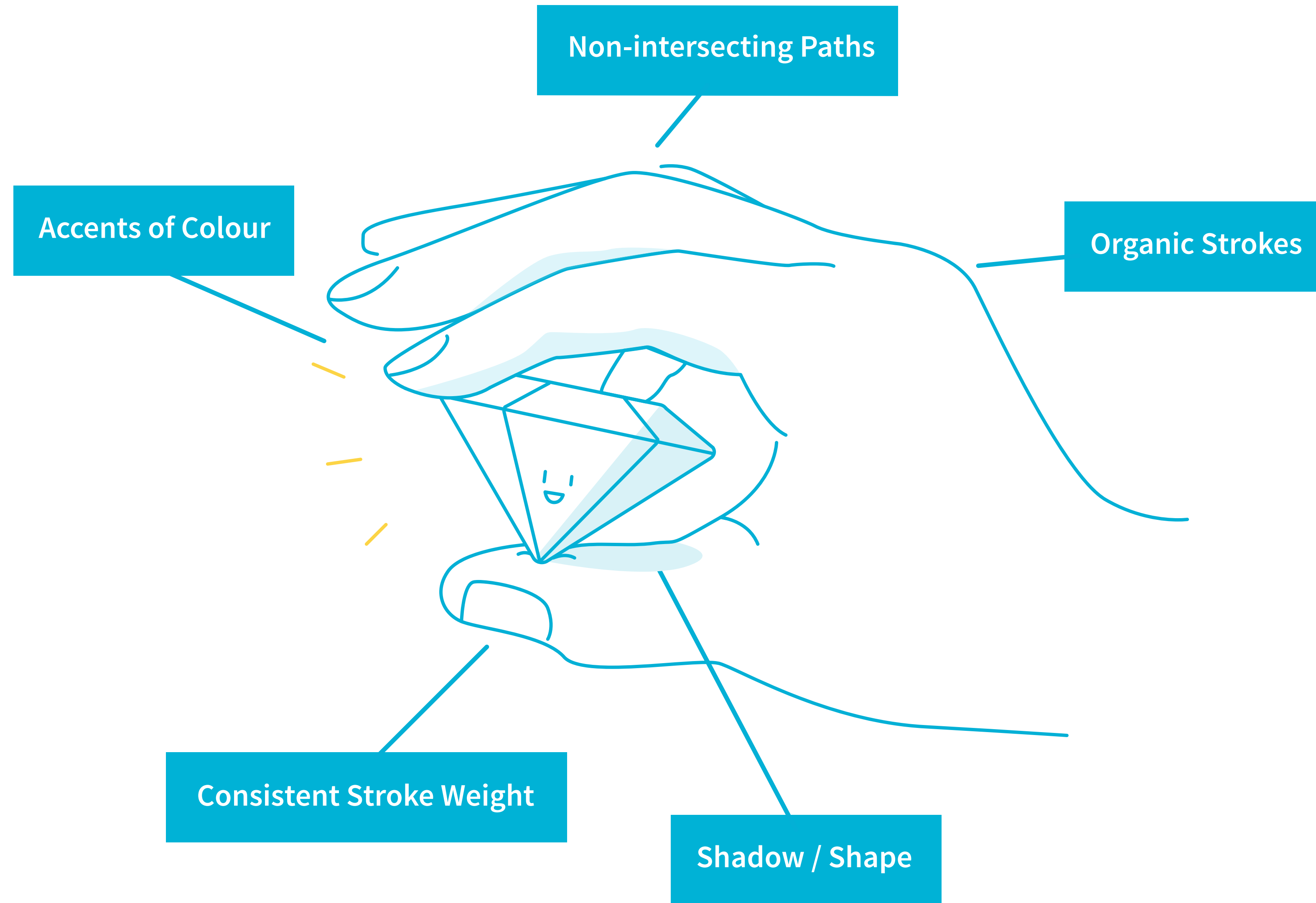

Live Corners - set to Absolute

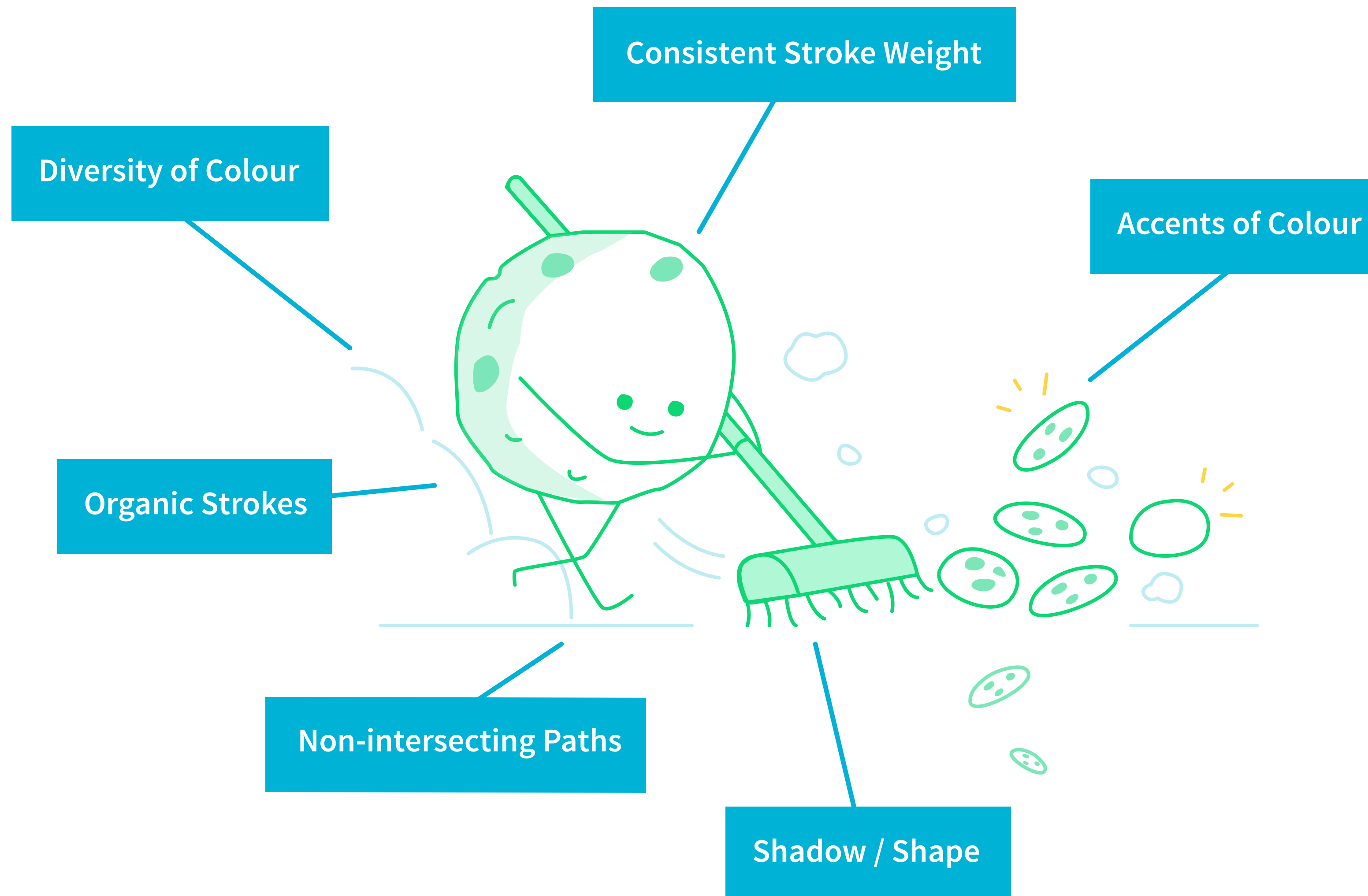Once you have your basic shape - change the radius on Live Corners to smooth things out.

30px

300px

There's no real hard-and-fast rule on these. Use your discretion and find the right radius.

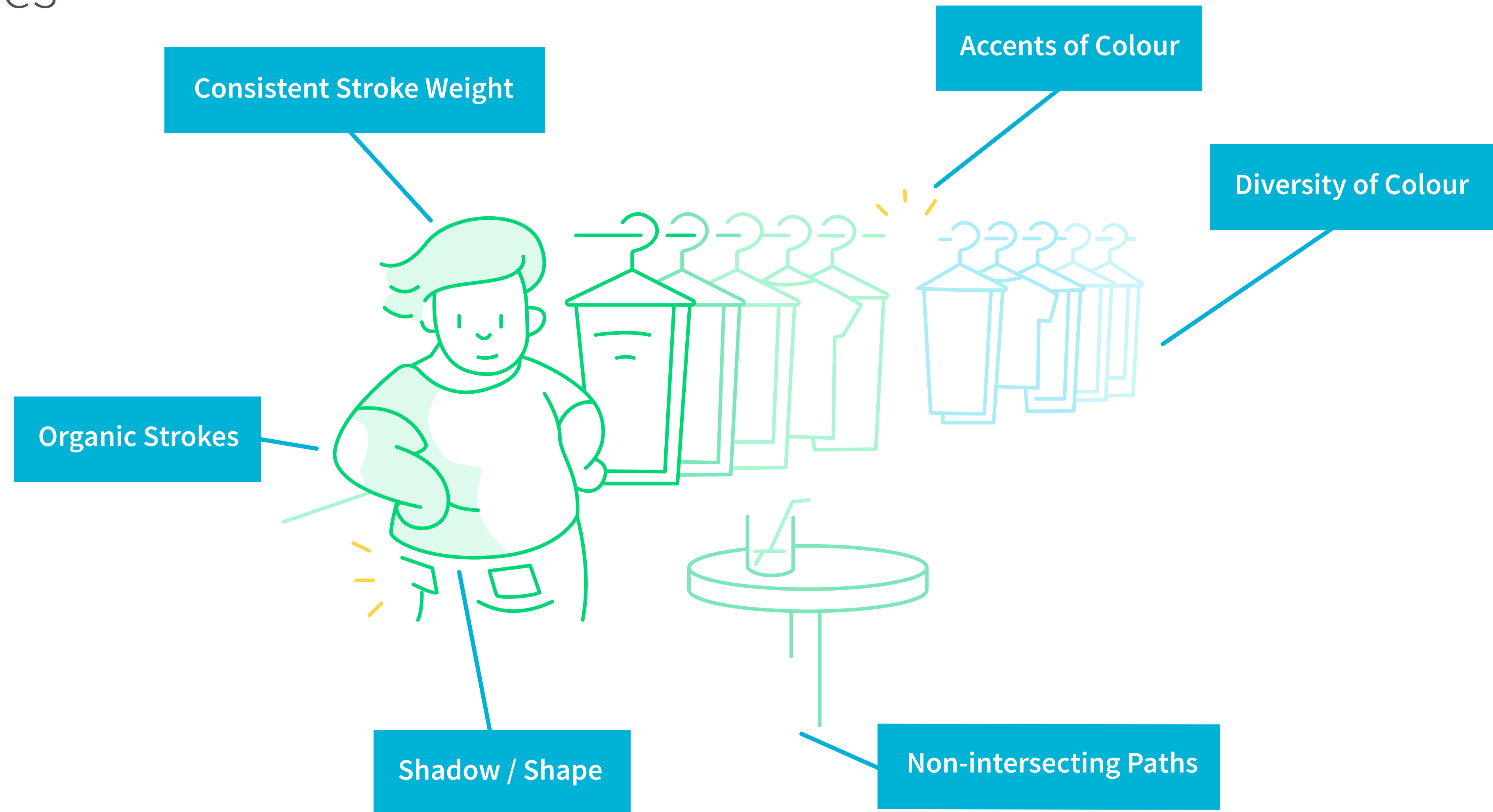# Examples

Non-intersecting Paths

Organic Strokes

Accents of Colour

Consistent Stroke Weight

Shadow / Shape

Examples

Consistent Stroke Weight

Diversity of Colour

Accents of Colour

Organic Strokes

Non-intersecting Paths

Shadow / Shape

Examples

Consistent Stroke Weight

Accents of Colour

Diversity of Colour

Organic Strokes

Shadow / Shape

Non-intersecting Paths

Examples

Accents of Colour

Organic Strokes
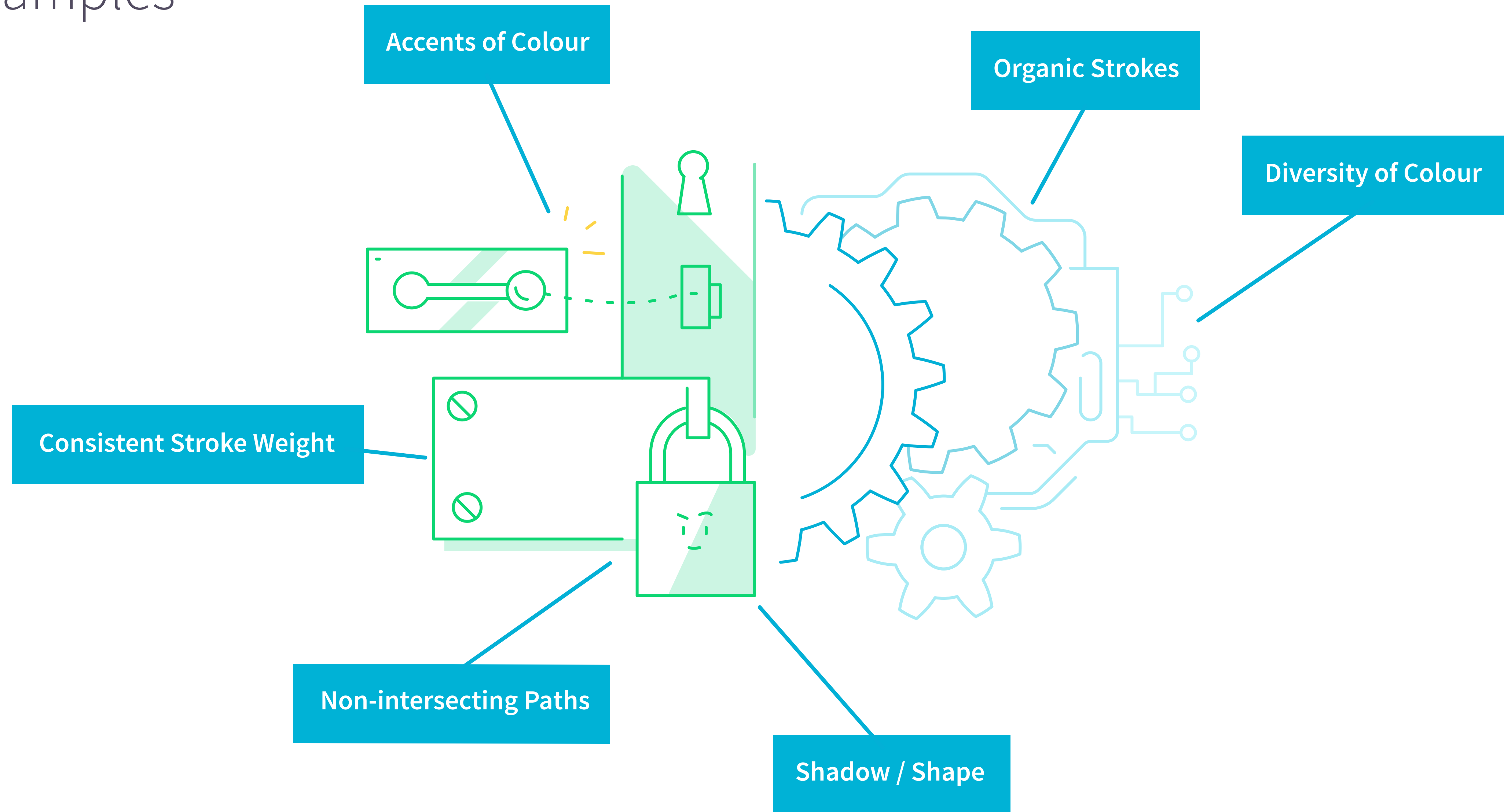
Diversity of Colour
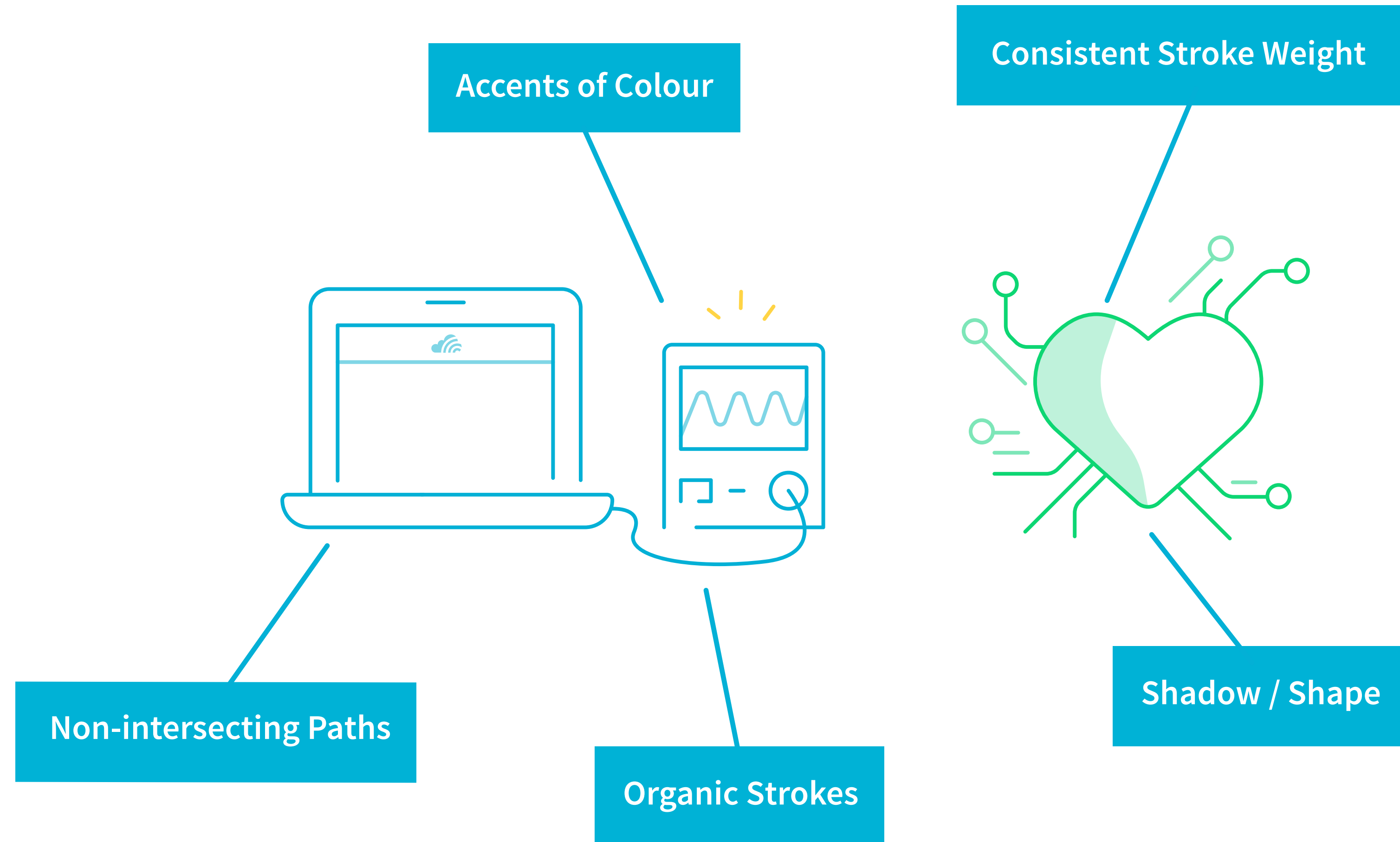
Consistent Stroke Weight

Non-intersecting Paths

Shadow / Shape

Examples

Even information-led illustrations adhere to these rules.

There's no need to keep every single element in there, just be aware of what makes an image unique and recognisable as a Skysanner illustration.

Accents of Colour

Consistent Stroke Weight

Non-intersecting Paths

Organic Strokes

Shadow / Shape

That's all, folks!

Now we know the base elements of the Skyscanner Illustration style.

These guidelines make it *easier* to create on-brand illustrations but the difficult part is creating imagery with humanity. *That is the next step*.

We must make an effort to showcase our personality as a company and illustration can be the perfect platform for that.

The choices you make in rendering motion, conveying emotion and storytelling all add to the user experience.

The most important rule with illustration is to have fun with it. **This is the good stuff!**