Work with Shapes

Concepts

The Shapes Tool is Versatile

The Shape tool and its objects in DMD are far more versatile than they might seem at first glance. We recommend that you experiment and play with them to master their use. Think of unexpected ways to mix shapes, tweak shapes, mask out shapes, and so on. With these tools, you can:

- Promote important messages in interesting ways.

- Maintain and expand your organization's identity design.

- Even doodle or create fine art *(not typical uses)* to grow more comfortable with DMD.
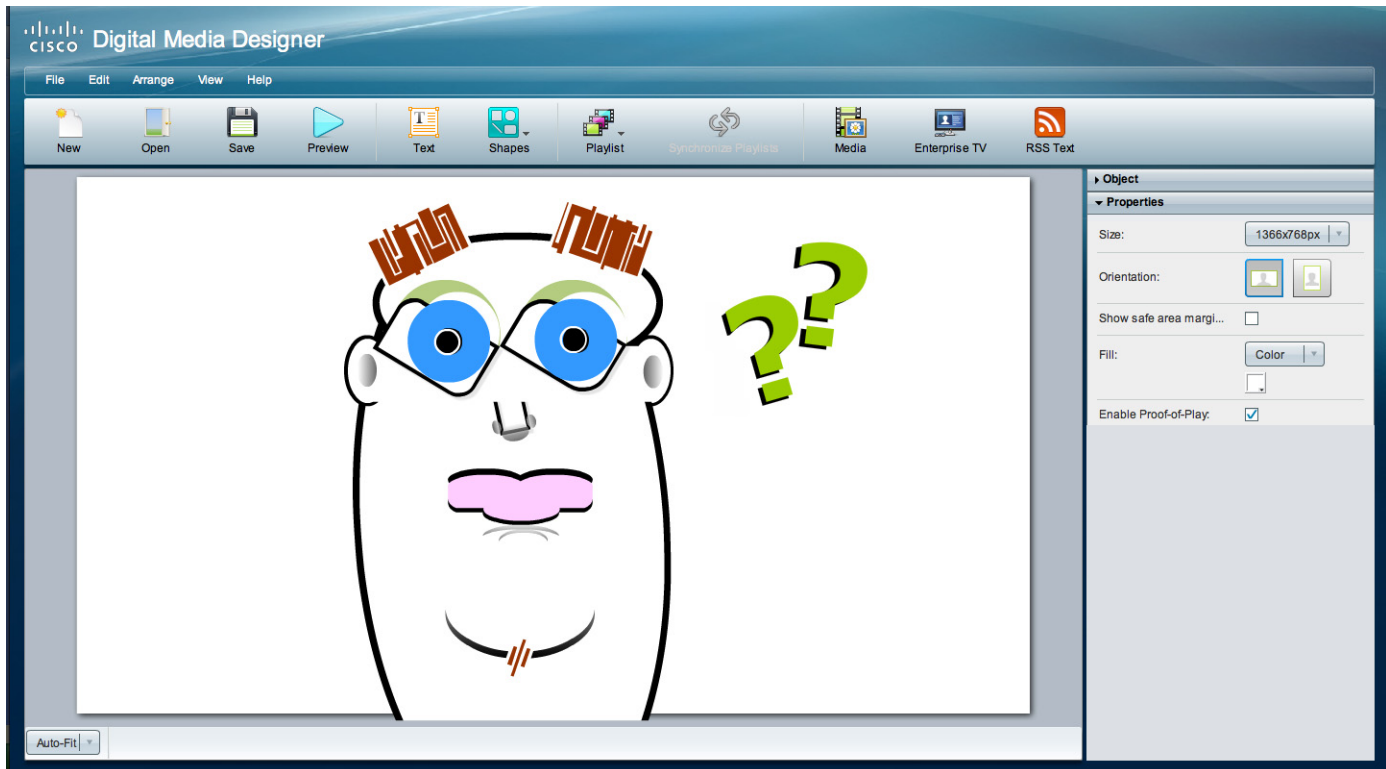
Guidelines for Shapes

Color and Contrast

- Avoid bright or saturated colors.

- If your design calls for text against a white background, make the background slightly gray instead.

- Adjust the forground and background tones until there is enough contrast that your text is readable from a distance.

- Light text against a dark background is easier to read on-screen than dark text on a light background.

Which Properties Can I Change?

After you click an object to choose it, tabs in the Properties drawer show and sort all of that object's properties — both editable and uneditable. Various properties apply to various object types.

Properties Drawer	Support by Shape		
	Rectangle	Ellipse	Line

Style Tab

	Rectangle	Ellipse	Line
Fill with one color	Yes	Yes	No
Fill with a gradient between two colors	Yes	Yes	No
Border style	Yes	Yes	No
Border color	Yes	Yes	Yes
Border thickness	Yes	Yes	Yes
Drop shadow	Yes	Yes	No
Object opacity	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rounded corners	Yes	No	No
Scale all corners together	Yes	No	No

Size Tab

	Rectangle	Ellipse	Line
Width and height	Yes	Yes	No
Constrain proportions	Yes	Yes	No
X and Y coordinates	Yes	Yes	Yes
Length	No	No	Yes

Tip   **You can drag a shape object up or down in the Objects drawer to change the layer stacking order on your canvas.**
Doing this changes the cumulative and relative effects of your drop shadows, opacity percentages, rounded corners, and so on.
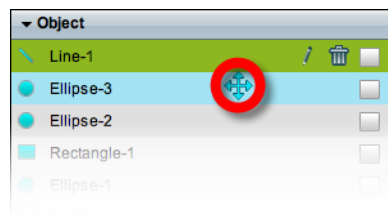
Visual Density—Transparent, Translucent, or Opaque?

You can adjust the density of any object on your canvas. However, the visual impact from this setting might be relative to other attributes of your design.

- Is your canvas filled with any color, picture, or gradient?

- Do the object's boundaries intersect with, or overlap, any other objects on your canvas? If so, to what degree are those other objects transparent or opaque?

- How many layers exist in your design?

- What is the stacking order of your layers in the Objects drawer?

For example, this figure compares four possible scenarios where black text is stacked under a red shape (with a white outline), on an all-white canvas.
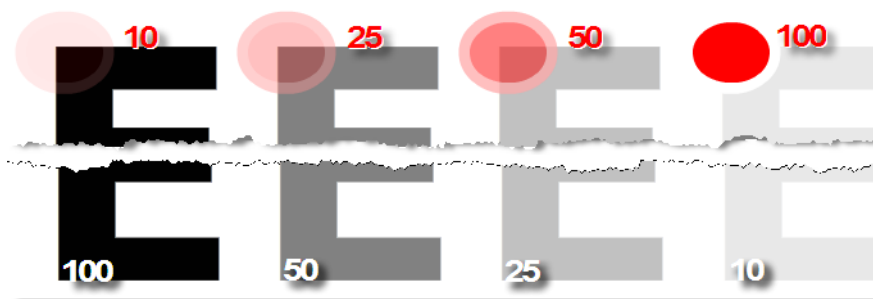

Compare the four variants from left to right.

- **Density *increases* for the red shape.**
  It rises from 10 percent to 100 percent. So, in the variant where the red shape has just 10 percent density, the black text behind it is clearly visible. This occurs even though the text is on a lower layer.

- **Meanwhile, density *decreases* for the black text.**
  It falls from 100 percent to 10 percent. So, in the variant where the red shape is fully opaque, even its white outline blots out the mostly transparent text on the lower layer.

Understand Color Gradient Behaviors

When you choose to fill a shape with a gradient between two colors, we show two color tools (▪) on the Style tab in the Properties drawer. Each of these color tools represents one extreme end of your gradient. Their effect differs when your choose whether the gradient itself should be horizontal or vertical.

These figures illustrate how the two gradient color tools function differently with horizontal and vertical gradients.
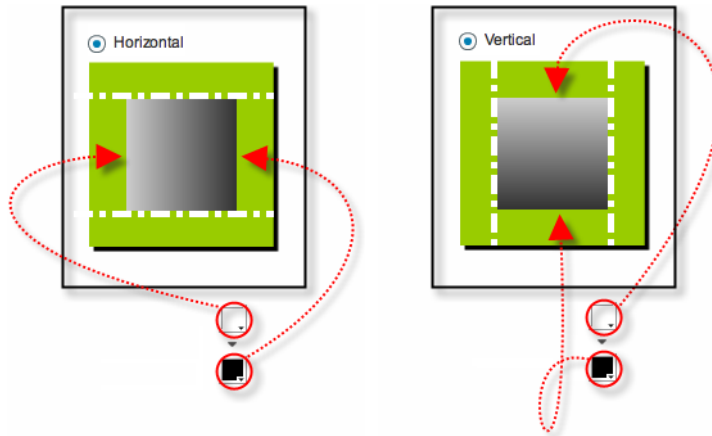
- The top color tool always controls either the **left edge** *or* the **top edge**.
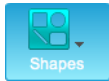- The bottom color tool always controls either the **right edge** *or* the **bottom edge**.
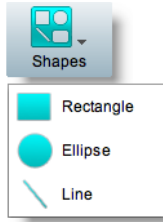
Procedures

Add a Shape Object

Procedure

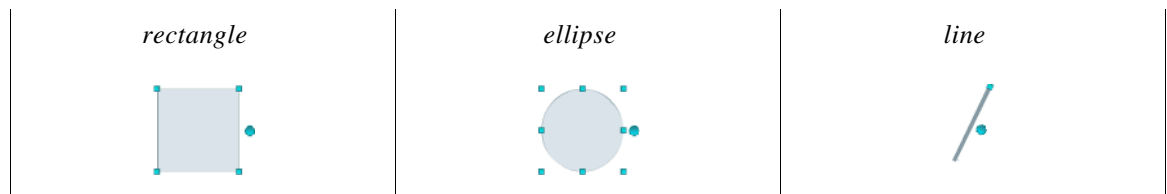**Step 1**   Click **Shapes** on the toolbar.

Step 2   Choose whether the new shape should be a rectangle, an oval, or a line.

DMD drops the new shape object onto your canvas.

rectangle	*ellipse*	*line*

Step 3   Stop. You have completed this procedure.

What to Do Next

- *Would you like to change anything about this object?*
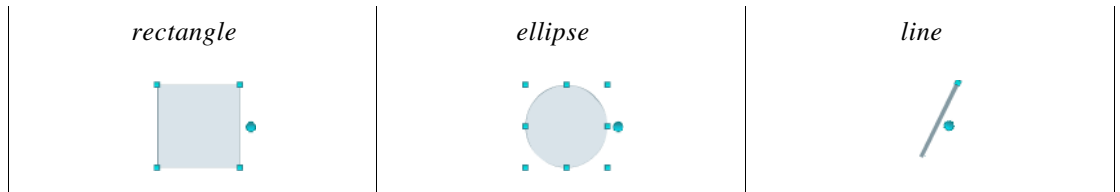 See the "Manipulate a Shape Object" section on page 3-9.

Lock or Unlock a Shape Object

While an object is locked, you cannot edit or delete it.

Procedure
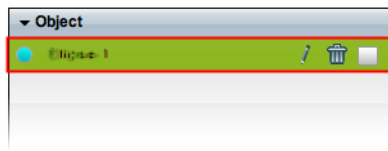
Step 1   Select the object that should change. You can:

- Click it on your canvas.

rectangle	*ellipse*	*line*

OR

- Click its name in the Object drawer.

Step 2   Click the Unlocked check box.

The object is now locked.

Tip   **When you want to edit or delete the object, simply reverse these steps.**

Step 3   Stop. You have completed this procedure.
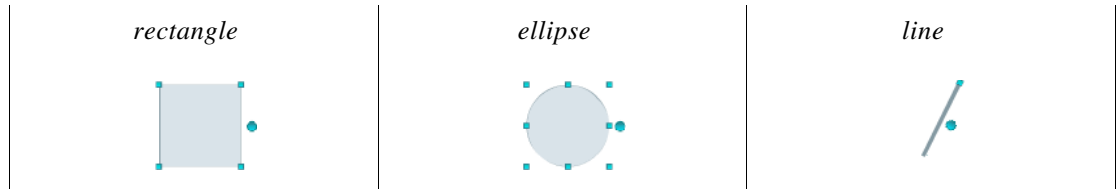
Delete or Restore a Shape Object

Before You Begin

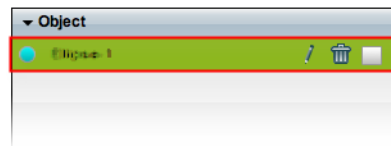- Verify that the object is not locked. You cannot delete a locked object.

Procedure

Step 1   Select the object that should change. You can:

- Click it on your canvas.

rectangle	*ellipse*	*line*

OR

- Click its name in the Object drawer.

Step 2   Click **Delete** (🗑).

✎
Note   **The deletion occurs immediately.** DMD does not prompt you to confirm this action.

🔍
Tip   **You can restore an object that was deleted accidentally.** Simply choose **Edit > Undo** immediately afterward. The object returns to its previous state.

Step 3   Stop. You have completed this procedure.

Related Topics

- Lock or Unlock a Shape Object, page 3-7

Manipulate a Shape Object
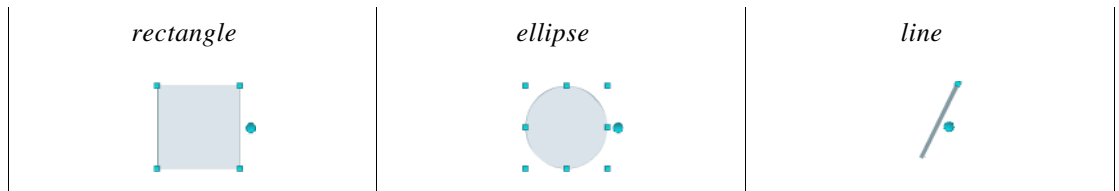
Rename a Shape Object

Before You Begin

- Verify that the object is not locked. You cannot change a locked object.

Procedure

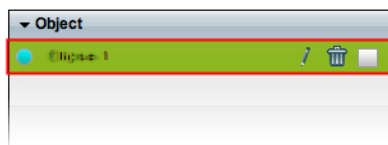**Step 1**   Select the object that should change. You can:

- Click it on your canvas.

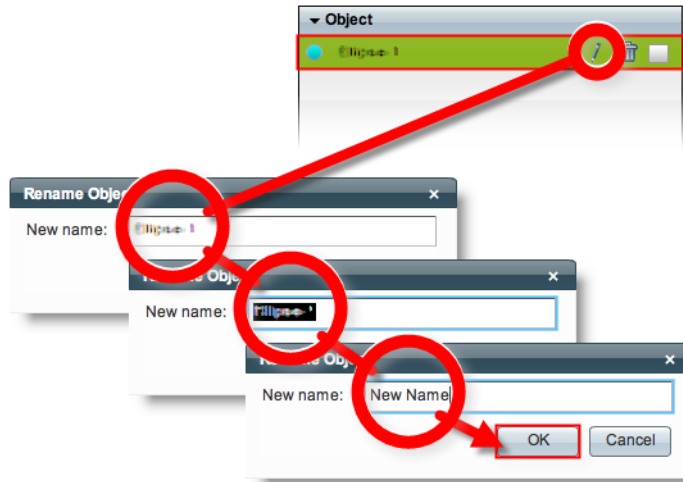| *rectangle*	*ellipse*	*line*

OR

- Click its name in the Object drawer.

Step 2   Click its Edit icon in the Object drawer, enter its new name, and then click **OK**.

Step 3   Stop. You have completed this procedure.

What to Do Next

- *Would you like to change anything about this object?*
  See the "Manipulate a Shape Object" section on page 3-9.

Related Topics

- Lock or Unlock a Shape Object, page 3-7

Set a Shape Object's Size

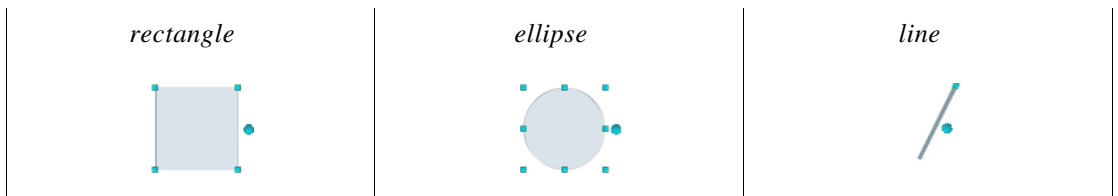You can change the size and proportions of an object on your canvas.

Before You Begin

- Verify that the object is not locked. You cannot change a locked object.
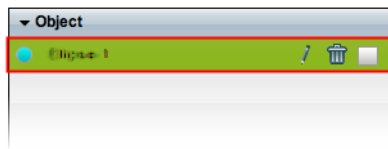
Procedure

Step 1   Select the object that should change. You can:

- Click it on your canvas.

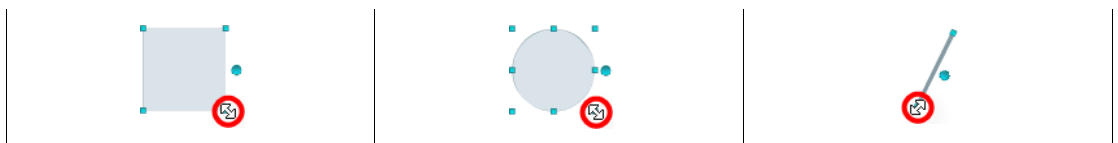| *rectangle*	*ellipse*	*line*

OR

- Click its name in the Object drawer.

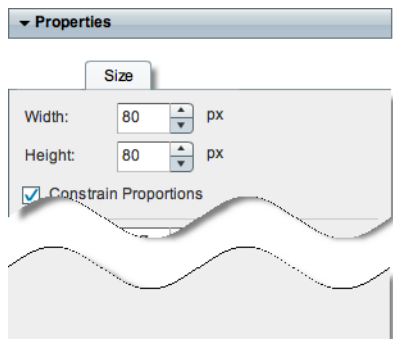**Step 2**   Resize the object.

- Click and drag a corner handle.

OR

- Change Width and Height values on the Size tab, in the Properties drawer.

🔍

Tip   **When you check the Constrain Proportions check box, you can change either the width or the height manually, and then DMD adjusts the other one automatically.** This convenience ensures that your object's basic shape does not change.

DMD applies theese new dimensions to the selected object.

Step 3   Stop. You have completed this procedure.

What to Do Next

- *Would you like to change anything else about this object?*
  See the "Manipulate a Shape Object" section on page 3-9.

Related Topics

- Lock or Unlock a Shape Object, page 3-7

Set a Shape Object's Coordinates
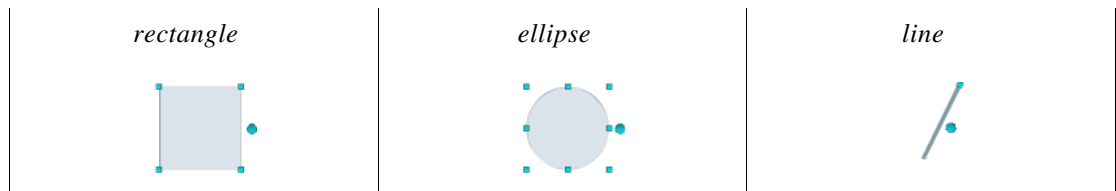
You can move an object on your canvas.

Before You Begin

- Verify that the object is not locked. You cannot change a locked object.
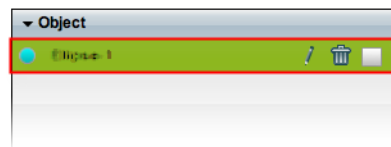
Procedure

Step 1   Select the object that should change. You can:

- Click it on your canvas.

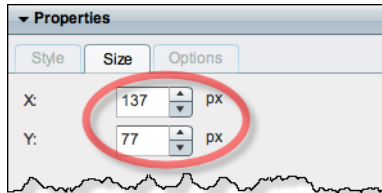| *rectangle*	*ellipse*	*line*

OR

- Click its name in the Object drawer.

Step 2   Move the object.

- Click the object to select it, and then press arrow keys on your keyboard.
    - ⬅ Nudge left.
    - ➡ Nudge right.
    - ⬆ Nudge up.
    - ⬇ Nudge down.

- Change *X* and *Y* values on the Size tab, in the Properties drawer.

🔍

Tip   **X measures pixel offset from the left canvas edge.** Increase it to nudge your object toward the right edge.
Y measures pixel offset from the top canvas edge. Increase it to nudge your object toward the bottom edge.

DMD moves to the selected object to its new coordinates.

Step 3   Stop. You have completed this procedure.

What to Do Next

- *Would you like to change anything else about this object?*
  See the "Manipulate a Shape Object" section on page 3-9.

Related Topics

- Lock or Unlock a Shape Object, page 3-7

Set a Shape Object's Rotation Angle
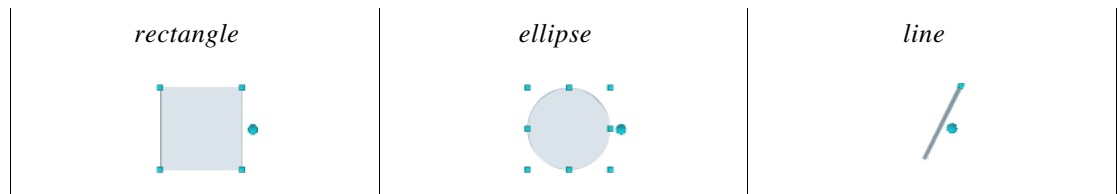
You can rotate an object on your canvas.

Before You Begin

- Verify that the object is not locked. You cannot change a locked object.
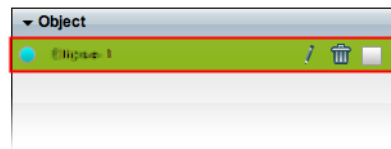
Procedure

Step 1 Select the object that should change. You can:

- Click it on your canvas.

rectangle	*ellipse*	*line*

OR

- Click its name in the Object drawer.

Step 2 Click the large handle on the object's right edge.

Tip   **Do not click a corner handle.**

Step 3 Drag the ↺ symbol left or right.

- Left rotates clockwise.
- Right rotates counter-clockwise.

DMD applies the new rotation angle to the selected object.

Step 4 Stop. You have completed this procedure.

What to Do Next

- *Would you like to change anything else about this object?*
  See the "Manipulate a Shape Object" section on page 3-9.

Related Topics

- Lock or Unlock a Shape Object, page 3-7

Set a Shape Object's Colors

Adjust the Solid Fill Color

You can set a shape's fill to any one, solid color that you choose.
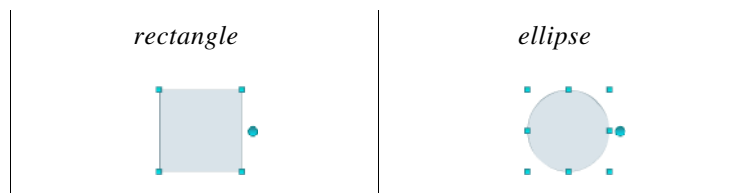
Before You Begin

- Verify that the object is not locked. You cannot change a locked object.
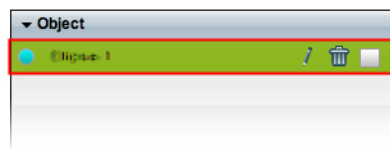
Procedure

Step 1   Select the object that should change. You can:
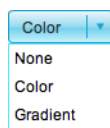
- Click it on your canvas.

rectangle	*ellipse*

OR

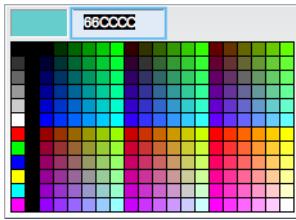- Click its name in the Object drawer.

Step 2   On the Style tab in the Properties drawer:

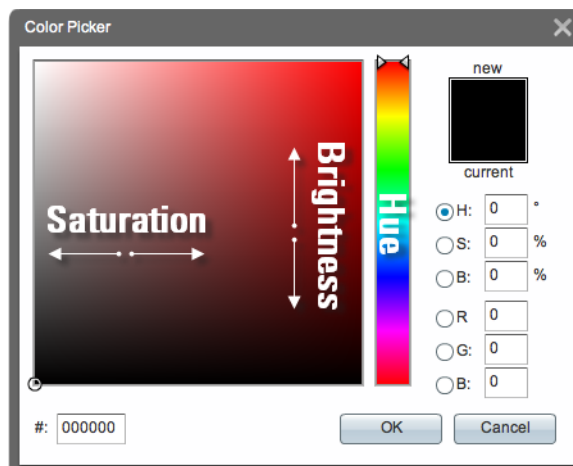**a.**   Choose **Color** from the Fill list.

b.   Find the fill color tool (▓) under the Fill list.

DMD reveals a related control (🌈) when your pointer hovers over the fill color tool.

c. Do one of the following.

- Click ■ to reveal a simple color swatch browser.
  Click a satisfactory color to choose it.

OR

- Click ● to open a standard color picker.

Then, do any of the following, as needed.

Hue, Saturation, and Brightness	• Enter a hue value in the H° field. OR Drag the range slider to set a value visually. • Enter saturation and brightness values in the S% and B% fields respectively. OR Click in the spectrum to set these values visually.
RGB	• Enter values in the R, G, and B fields.
Hexadecimal Color Code	• Enter the hexadecimal code for a web-safe color in the # field.

d. Click **OK**.

DMD fills the selected object with the new color.

Step 3 Stop. You have completed this procedure.

What to Do Next

- *Would you like to change anything else about this object?*
  See the "Manipulate a Shape Object" section on page 3-9.

Related Topics

- Lock or Unlock a Shape Object, page 3-7

Adjust the Gradient Fill Colors

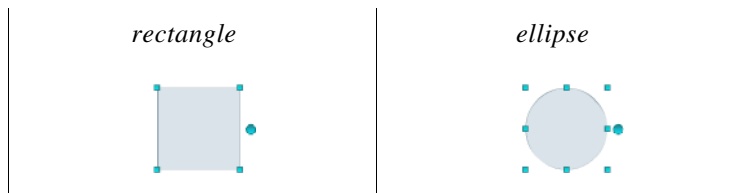You can set a shape's fill to be a gradient between any two colors that you choose.

Before You Begin

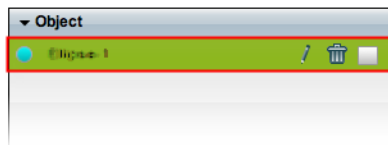- Verify that the object is not locked. You cannot change a locked object.

Procedure

Step 1   Select the object that should change. You can:
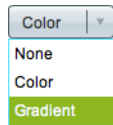
- Click it on your canvas.

rectangle	*ellipse*

OR

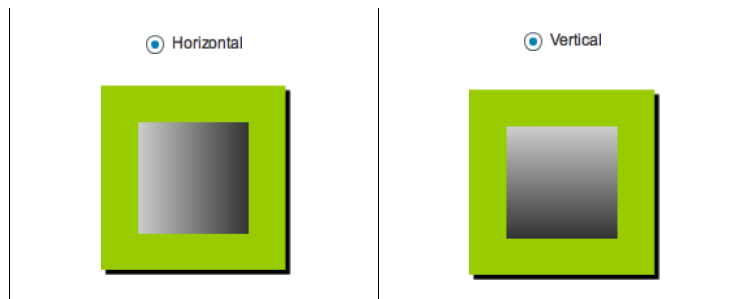- Click its name in the Object drawer.

Step 2   On the Style tab in the Properties drawer:

a. Choose **Gradient** from the Fill list.

b. Choose whether the gradient should be horizontal or vertical.
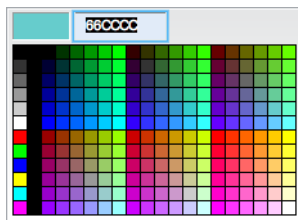

c. Find the two gradient color tools (■).

DMD reveals a related control (🌈) when your pointer hovers over either of the gradient color tools.

d. Do one of the following with the **higher** of the two gradient color tools.
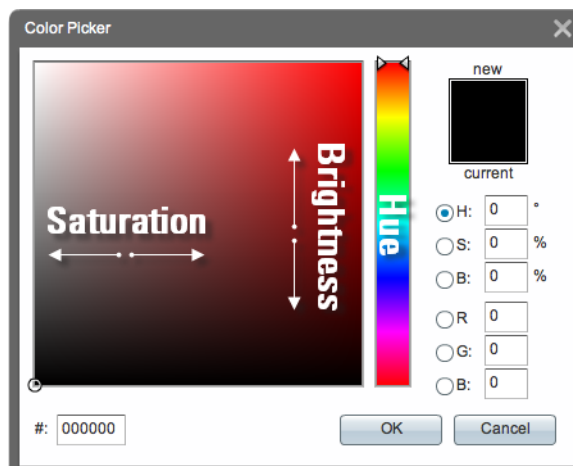

- Click to reveal a simple color swatch browser.
  Click a satisfactory color to choose it.

  OR

- Click 🌈 to open a standard color picker.

e. Repeat the previous step—but this time, use the **lower** of the two gradient color tools.

f. Click **OK**.

DMD fills the selected object with the new gradient.

Step 3   Stop. You have completed this procedure.

What to Do Next

- *Would you like to change anything else about this object?*
  See the .

Related Topics

-

Adjust the Border (Outline) Color

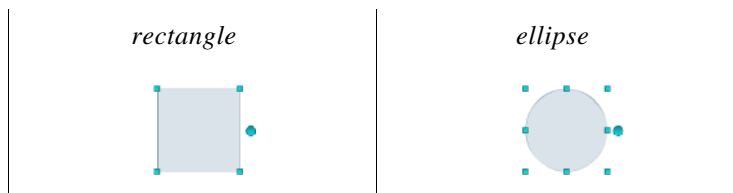You can set a shape's border to any color that you choose.

Before You Begin

- Verify that the object is not locked. You cannot change a locked object.
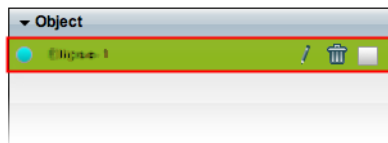
Procedure

Step 1   Select the object that should change. You can:

- Click it on your canvas.

rectangle   *ellipse*

OR

- Click its name in the Object drawer.

Step 2   Adjust attributes on the Style tab in the Properties drawer.

    a.   Check the Border check box (☑ Border).

    b.   Find the color tool (■) on the Style tab in the Properties drawer.
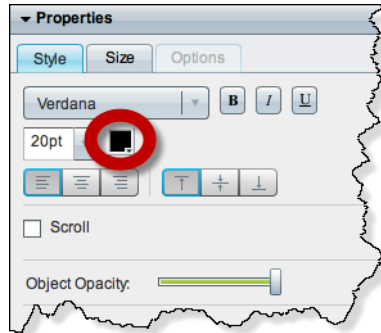
DMD reveals a related control (●) when your pointer hovers over the border color tool.

c. Do one of the following.

- Click ■ to reveal a simple color swatch browser.
  Click a satisfactory color to choose it.

OR

Click ● to open a standard color picker.

Then, do any of the following, as needed.

Hue, Saturation, and Brightness	• Enter a hue value in the H° field. OR Drag the range slider to set a value visually. • Enter saturation and brightness values in the S% and B% fields respectively. OR Click in the spectrum to set these values visually.
RGB	• Enter values in the R, G, and B fields.
Hexadecimal Color Code	• Enter the hexadecimal code for a web-safe color in the # field.

d. Click **OK**.

DMD outlines the selected object with the new color.

Step 3 Stop. You have completed this procedure.

What to Do Next

- *Would you like to change anything else about this object?*
  See the "Manipulate a Shape Object" section on page 3-9.

Related Topics

- Lock or Unlock a Shape Object, page 3-7

Set a Shape Object's Border Thickness (Weight)

You can set a shape's border to any thickness in the range from 0 to 40 pixels.

Before You Begin

- Verify that the object is not locked. You cannot change a locked object.
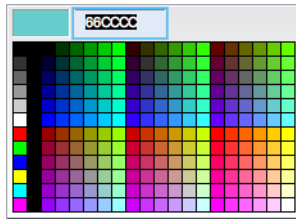
Procedure

Step 1   Select the object that should change. You can:

- Click it on your canvas.

rectangle	*ellipse*

OR

- Click its name in the Object drawer.
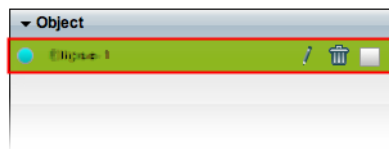
Step 2   Adjust attributes on the Style tab in the Properties drawer.

a.   Check the Border check box (☑ Border).

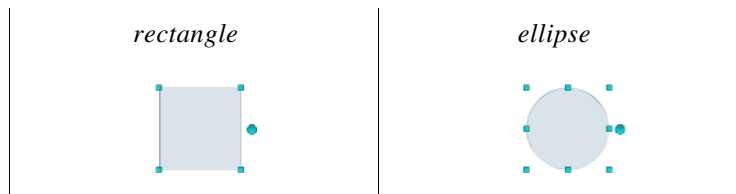b.   Use the Border Thickness spinner to change the border's weight in pixels.

Border Thickness: 1

Tip   We support border thickness weights in the range from 1 to 40 pixels.

You can operate this spinner in various ways.

- Click the **Up** button (▲) to increase the weight.
- Click the **Down** button (▼) to decrease the weight.
- Click inside the spinner, and then press the **Up** (↑) and **Down** (↓) arrow keys on your keyboard to increase or decrease the weight.

- Click inside the spinner, and then use the scroll wheel on your mouse to increase or decrease the weight.

- Enter a number in the spinner's text box, and then press **Enter**.

DMD applies the new border weight to the selected object.

Step 3   Stop. You have completed this procedure.

What to Do Next

- *Would you like to change anything else about this object?*

Related Topics

Set a Shape Object's Border Style

You can set the outline of a rectangle or ellipse to a style that you choose.

Before You Begin

- Verify that the object is not locked. You cannot change a locked object.
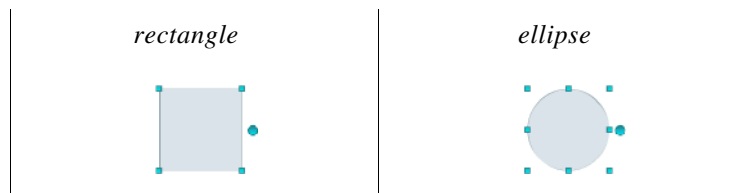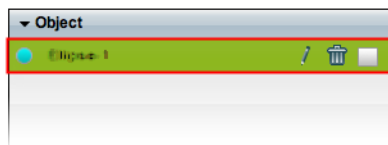
Procedure

Step 1   Select the object that should change. You can:

- Click it on your canvas.

rectangle   *ellipse*

OR

- Click its name in the Object drawer.

Step 2   Adjust attributes on the Style tab in the Properties drawer.

a.   Check the Border check box (☑ Border).

b.   Choose a style from the Border Style list.

none	*solid*	*dashed*	*dotted*	*inset*	*outset*
The canvas is WYSIWYG for these border styles. You can rely on what it shows you.	The canvas is not WYSIWYG for these border styles. Instead, use the Preview function to check your work. Click **Save**. Then, click **Preview**.				

DMD applies the new border style to the selected object.

Step 3   Stop. You have completed this procedure.

What to Do Next

- *Would you like to change anything else about this object?*
  See the "Manipulate a Shape Object" section on page 3-9.

Related Topics

- Lock or Unlock a Shape Object, page 3-7

Set a Shape Object's Visual Density

Visual density causes an object to be transparent, translucent, or opaque.

Before You Begin

- Verify that the object is not locked. You cannot change a locked object.

Procedure

Step 1 Select the object that should change. You can:

- Click it on your canvas.

rectangle	*ellipse*	*line*

OR
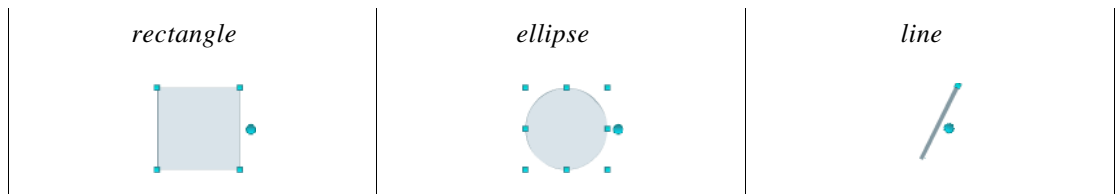
- Click its name in the Object drawer.
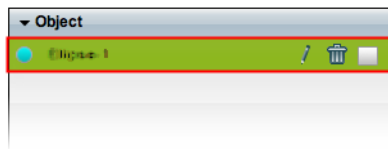
Step 2 Find the Object Opacity slider (▭▭▭▭) on the Style tab, in the Properties drawer.

Tip   **When you push the slider left or right, a tooltip (30%) appears above the slider's handle.** This tooltip tells you the object's current percentage of density.

Step 3   Push the slider left or right to control your object's density.

- **The far left end causes full transparency.**
  An object is fully transparent when its density reaches the threshold at 0 (*zero* or *zed*) percent.

- **Middle values are translucent.**
  When translucency is your goal, avoid pushing the slider too far in either direction. Subtle translucency at either extreme might never serve its intended purpose.

- **The far right end causes full opacity.**
  An object is fully opaque when its density reaches the threshold at 100 percent.

DMD applies the new density to the selected object.

Step 4   Stop. You have completed this procedure.

What to Do Next

- *Would you like to change anything else about this object?*
  See the "Manipulate a Shape Object" section on page 3-9.

Related Topics

- Lock or Unlock a Shape Object, page 3-7

Round the Corners of a Rectangle

You can blunt any combination of a rectangle shape's right-angle corners on your canvas.

Before You Begin

- Verify that the object is not locked. You cannot change a locked object.
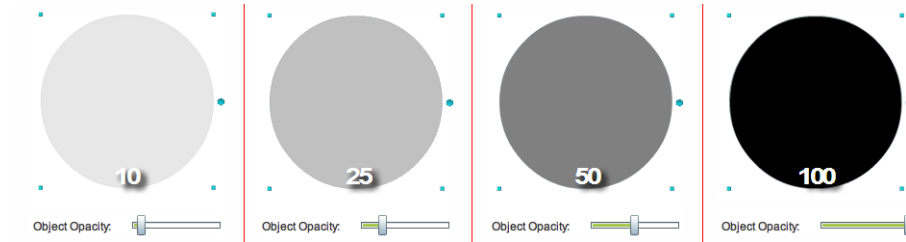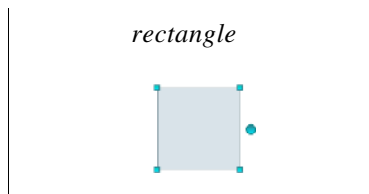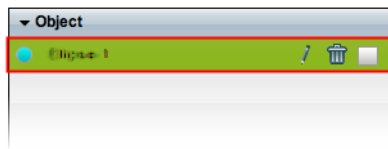
Procedure

Step 1   Select the object that should change. You can:

- Click it on your canvas.

rectangle

OR

- Click its name in the Object drawer.

Step 2   Adjust attributes on the Style tab in the Properties drawer.

   a.   Find the Rounded Corners sliders (⬛━━━▮).

   b.   Push the sliders left or right to blunt your rectangle's corners.

> 🔍 **Tip**   **When you push the slider left or right, a tooltip appears above the slider's handle.** This tooltip tells you the respective corner's current rounding in pixels.

DMD applies the new rounding values to corners of the selected rectangle shape.

Step 3   Stop. You have completed this procedure.

What to Do Next

- *Would you like to change anything else about this object?*
  See the "Manipulate a Shape Object" section on page 3-9.

Related Topics

- Lock or Unlock a Shape Object, page 3-7

Set a Line Object's Length

You can change a line's length.

Before You Begin

- Verify that the object is not locked. You cannot change a locked object.

Procedure

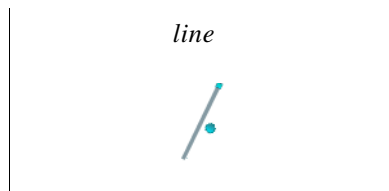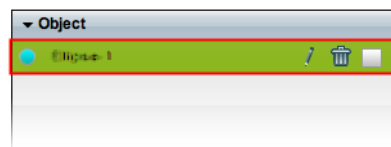**Step 1**   Select the object that should change. You can:

- Click it on your canvas.

line

OR

- Click its name in the Object drawer.

Step 2   Adjust attributes on the Size tab in the Properties drawer.

a.   Use the Length spinner to change the line's length in pixels.

Length: px

Tip   **The maximum supported line length varies according to the size of your canvas.** The minimum length is 1 pixel.

You can operate this spinner in various ways.

- Click the **Up** button ( ) to increase the lengtrh.
- Click the **Down** button ( ) to decrease the length.
- Click inside the spinner, and then press the **Up** ( ) and **Down** ( ) arrow keys on your keyboard to increase or decrease the weight.

     • Click inside the spinner, and then use the scroll wheel on your mouse to increase or decrease the length.

     • Enter a number in the spinner's text box, and then press **Enter**.

DMD applies the new length to the selected object.

Step 3   Stop. You have completed this procedure.

What to Do Next

• *Would you like to change anything else about this object?*
See the "Manipulate a Shape Object" section on page 3-9.

Related Topics

• Lock or Unlock a Shape Object, page 3-7

Set a Shape Object's Drop Shadow

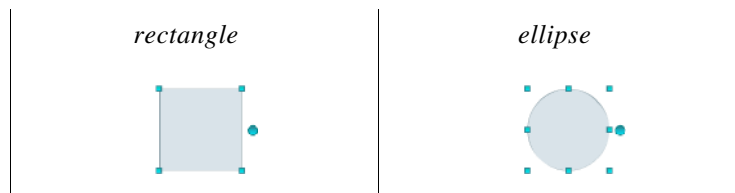You can set apply a drop shadow to a shape object on your canvas.

Before You Begin

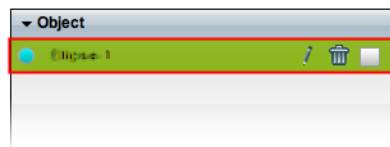• Verify that the object is not locked. You cannot change a locked object.

Procedure

Step 1   Select the object that should change. You can:

• Click it on your canvas.

   *rectangle*   *ellipse*

    OR

• Click its name in the Object drawer.

Step 2   Adjust attributes on the Style tab in the Properties drawer.

    a.   Check the Drop Shadow check box (☑ Drop Shadow).

    b.   Find the drop shadow opacity slider (⬚) under the Drop Shadow check box.

🔍
Tip   **When you push the slider left or right, a tooltip (30%) appears above the slider's handle.** This tooltip tells you the drop shadow's current percentage of density.

    c. Push the slider left or right to control your drop shadow's density.

- **The far left end causes full transparency.**
  A drop shadow is fully transparent when its density reaches the threshold at 0 (*zero or zed*) percent.

- **Middle values are translucent.**
  When translucency is your goal, avoid pushing the slider too far in either direction. Subtle translucency at either extreme might never serve its intended purpose.

- **The far right end causes full opacity.**
  A drop shadow is fully opaque when its density reaches the threshold at 100 percent.

translucent drop shadow   *fully opaque drop shadow*
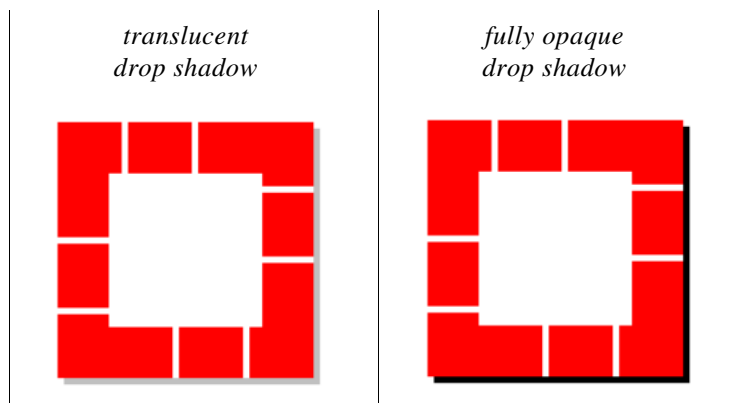
    DMD applies the new drop shadow to the selected object.

Step 3   Stop. You have completed this procedure.

What to Do Next

- *Would you like to change anything else about this object?*
  See the "Manipulate a Shape Object" section on page 3-9.

Related Topics

- Lock or Unlock a Shape Object, page 3-7