



Measuring the unmeasurable

Real strategies for research impact

A Quirk's presentation by Daron Sharps, PhD
July 2023





Hello, I'm Daron



Flow

1.

Some things I have
tried to measure

2.

Case study:
Owning Inspiration
and follow-on
research

3.

My principles for
pinning down

The best research touches on “squishy” concepts all the time

- ✔ What is inspiration and how does it happen?
- ✔ Why is positivity important for Pinterest?
- ✔ In what ways can inspiration influence wellbeing?



Case study: Inspiration



Pinterest's mission
is to bring everyone
the inspiration to
create a life they love.

But prior to this research, we
struggled with a cross-functional and
measurable definition of inspiration



How we got here: a multi-method research project



1

Expert interviews

Triangulating psychological,
academic and social
perspectives

How we got here: a multi-method research project



1

Expert interviews

Triangulating psychological, academic and social perspectives

2

Digital safaris and qual communities

Exploring how Pinners seek inspiration, in real scenarios and online communities

How we got here: a multi-method research project



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Expert interviews

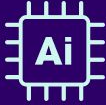
Triangulating psychological, academic and social perspectives



2

Digital safaris and qual communities

Exploring how Pinners seek inspiration, in real scenarios and online communities

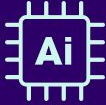


3

AI semiotic analysis

Determining the themes that are most prevalent in pins

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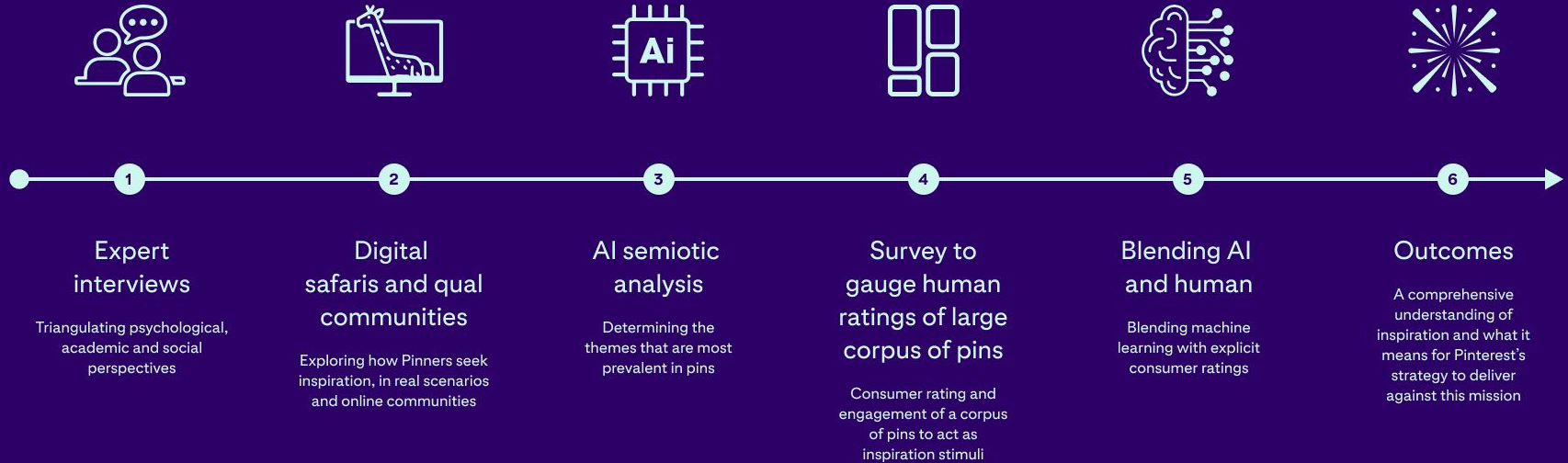
Determining the themes that are most prevalent in pins

4

Survey to gauge human ratings of large corpus of pins

Consumer rating and engagement of a corpus of pins to act as inspiration stimuli

How we got here: a multi-method research project



*Inspiration =
Insight + Movement*

Source: Firefish, US, DE, BR, JP, Owning Inspiration analysis, May 2021

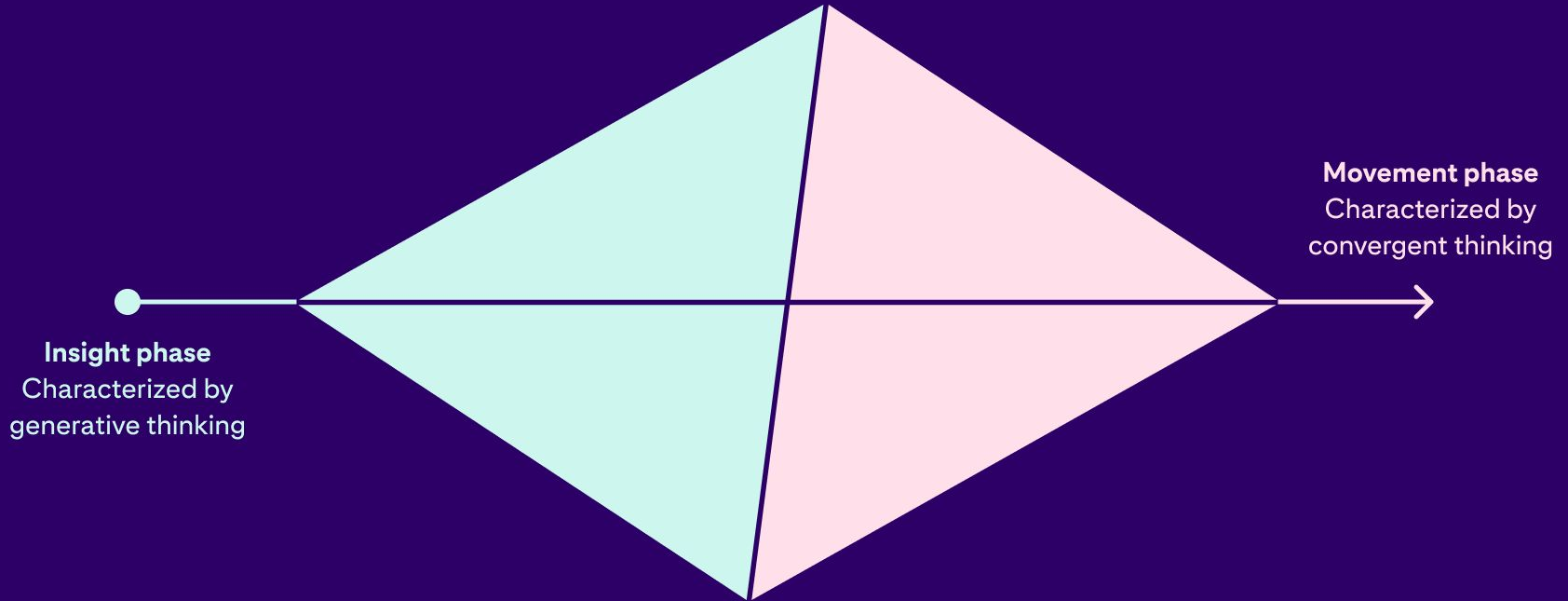
Insight without Movement

Insight without movement is
simply “entertainment,
knowledge, or curiosity”

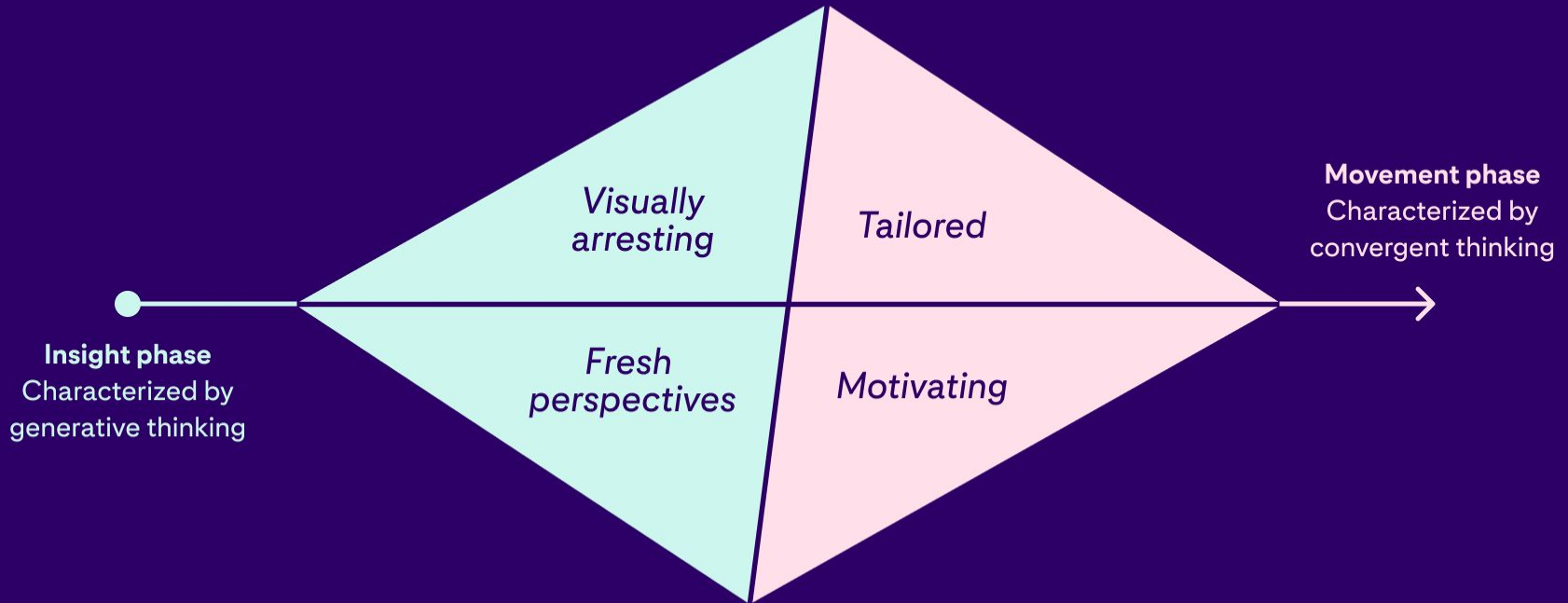
Movement without Insight

Movement without insight is
simply “doing or motivation”

The Inspiration Diamond



The Inspiration Diamond





Case study remix: Inspiration research agenda



Why does
inspiration
matter?



Inspiration is a fundamental human quality

**It's how we grow and move forward
as people**

“ *Inspiration awakens us to new possibilities by allowing us to transcend our ordinary experiences and limitations.* - Scott Barry Kaufman, HBR

It's what helps culture to evolve

“ *We have cumulative culture - we learn from each other. Inspiration is the driving motivation, in my view, that explains the evolution. I think inspiration is central to the innovation and dissemination of promising ideas.* - Dr. Todd Thrash

Inspiration has wellbeing benefits

Active engagement with
inspiring content on Pinterest
mitigates the effects of rising
**burnout, stress, and social
disconnectedness** among
Gen Z

Inspiration has a halo effect for brands

Research by Pinterest's Sydney Stanback

- ✔ Pinterest is the most inspirational media environment, online OR offline
- ✔ Inspirational platforms drive brand demand
- ✔ And inspiration can produce a more valuable media plan



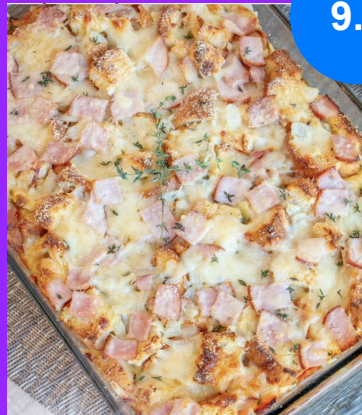
Can we measure
inspiration?



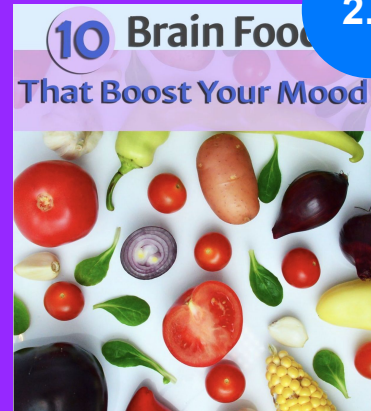
8.4



3.6



9.2



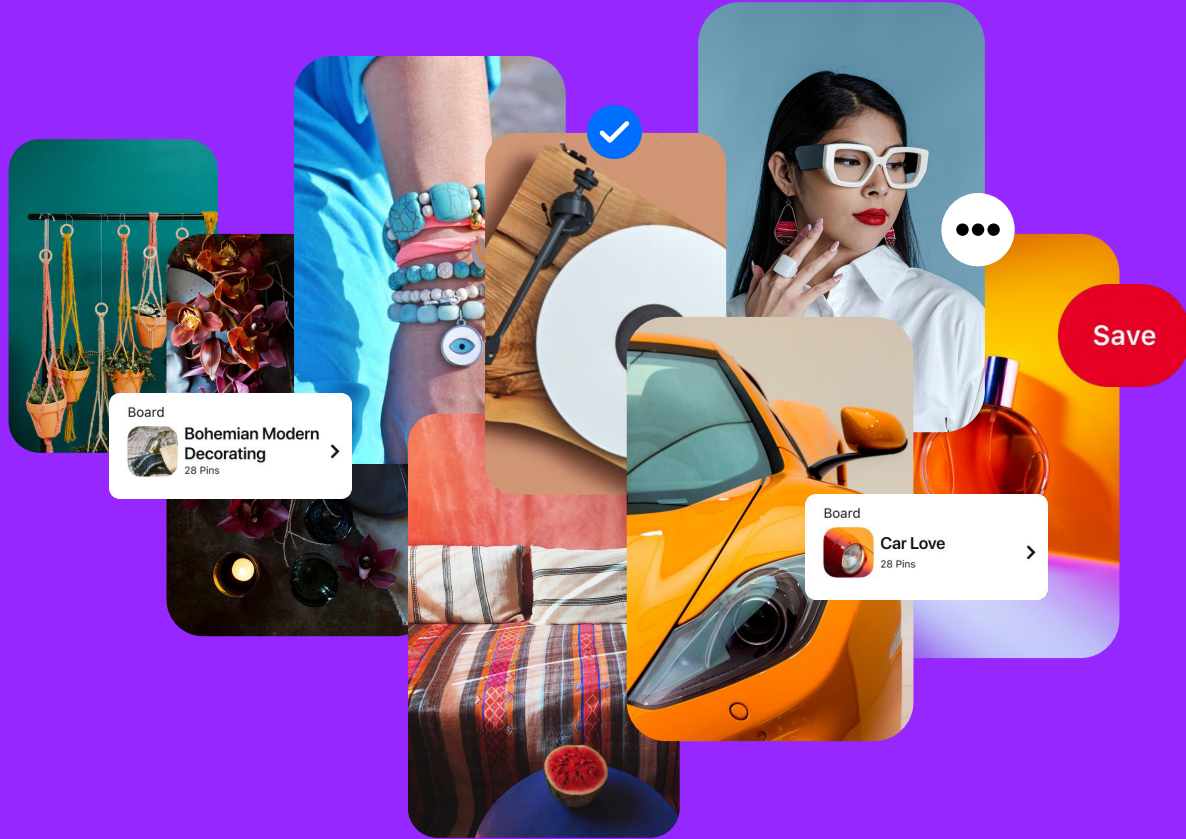
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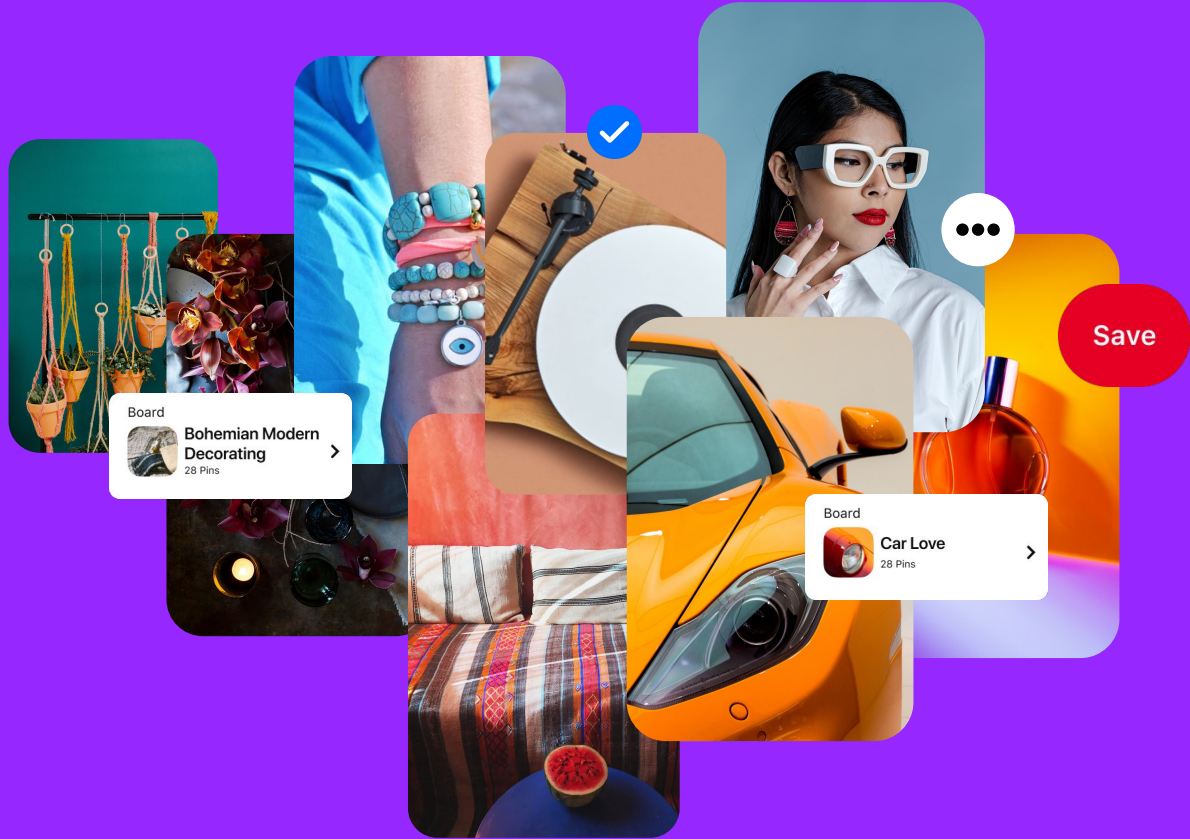
Principles for pinning down



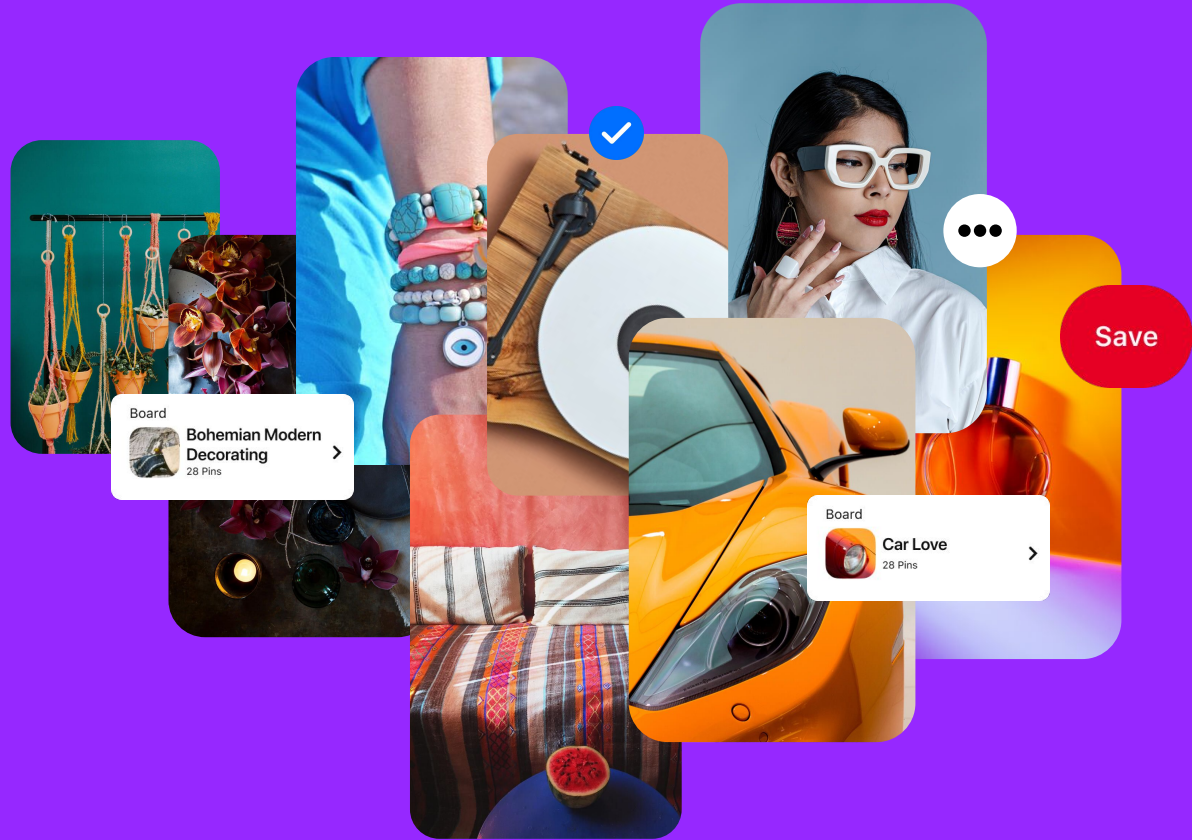
Cultivate curiosity



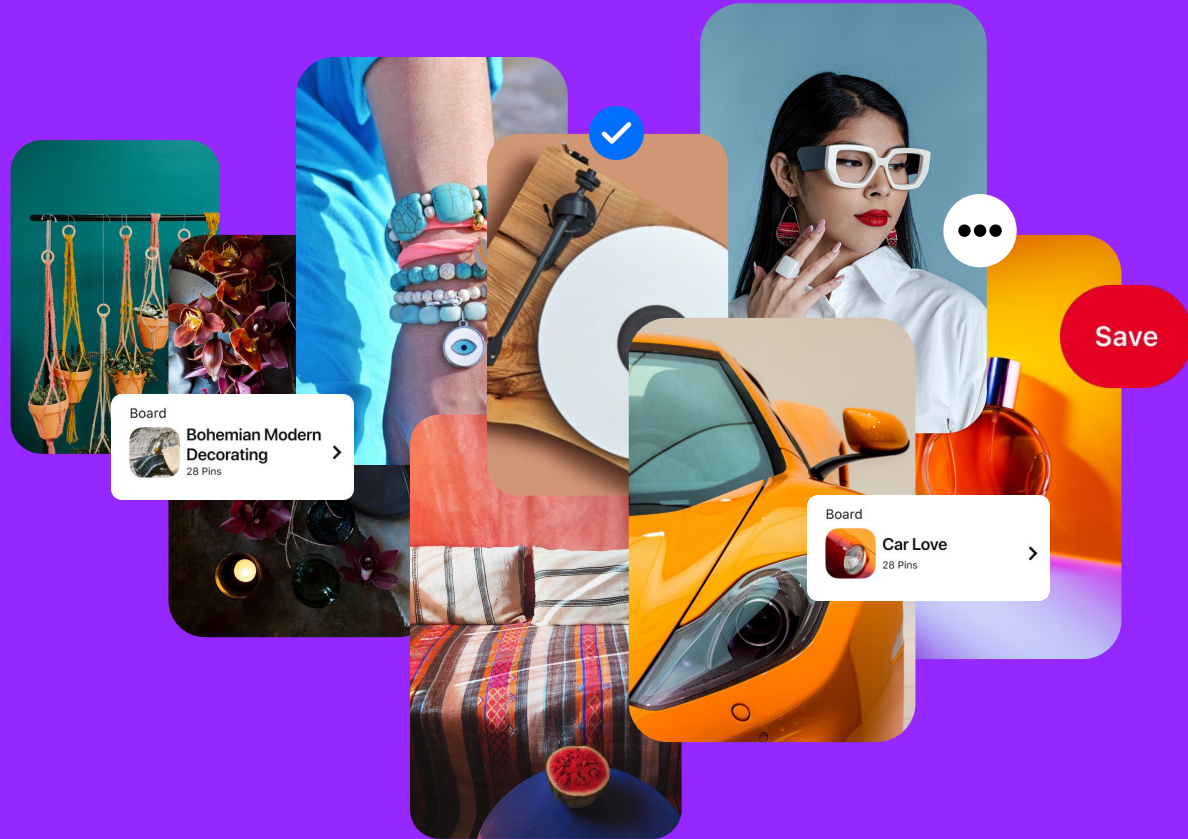
Define your construct



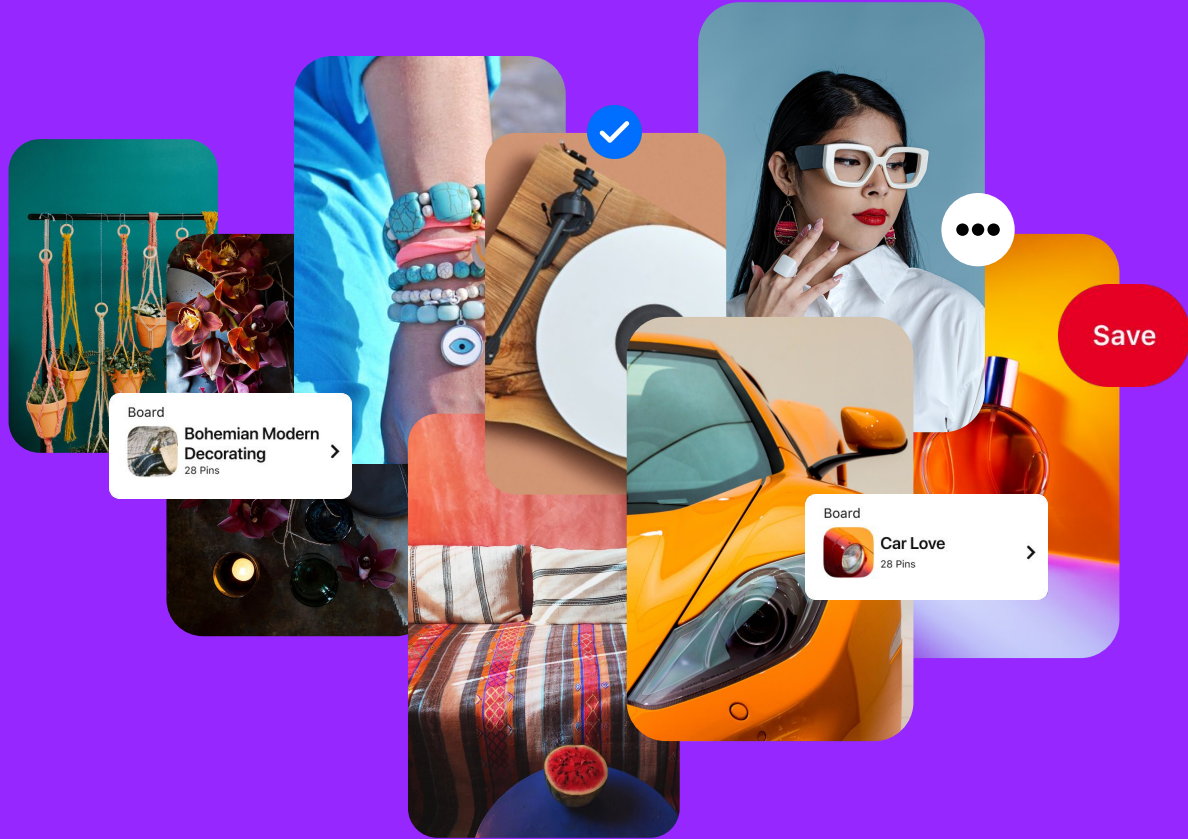
Consider a research agenda



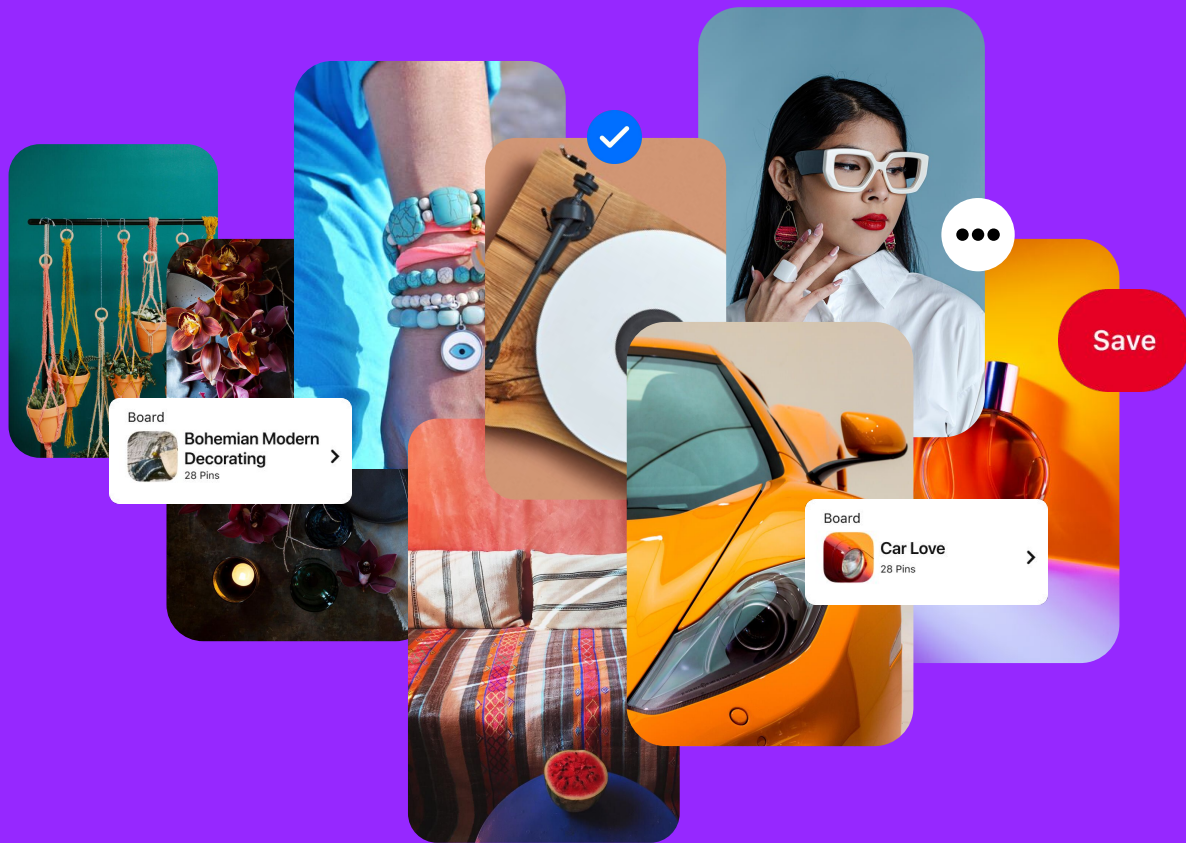
Go far
and wide
with
RFPs



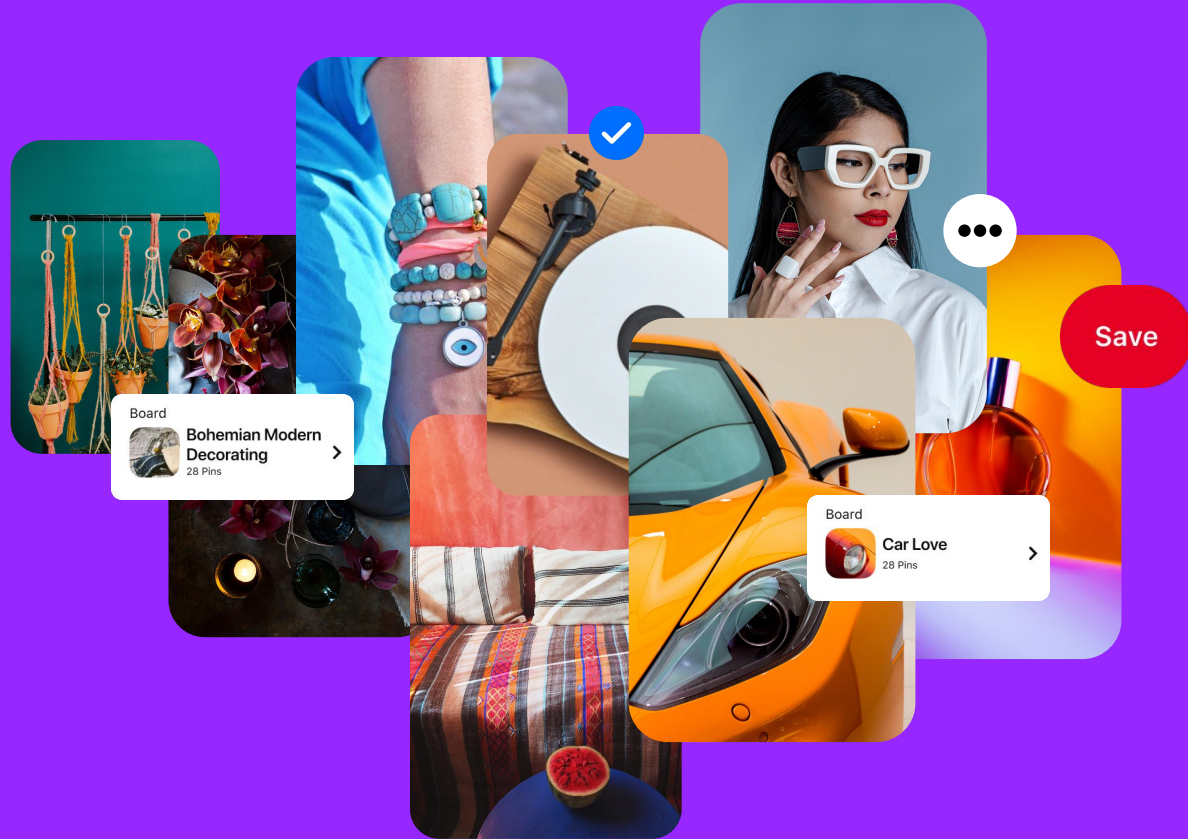
Build on
the
thinking
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Get
cross-
functional
with it

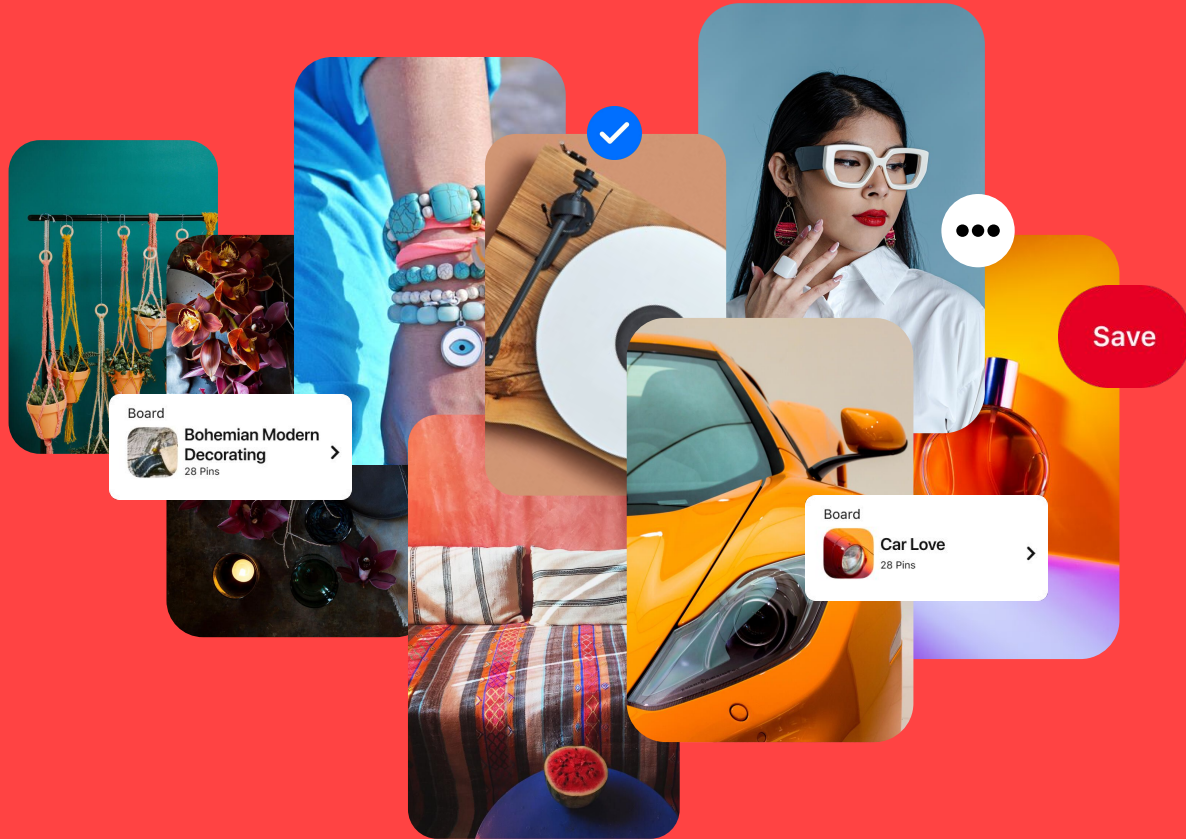


Use multi- method approaches

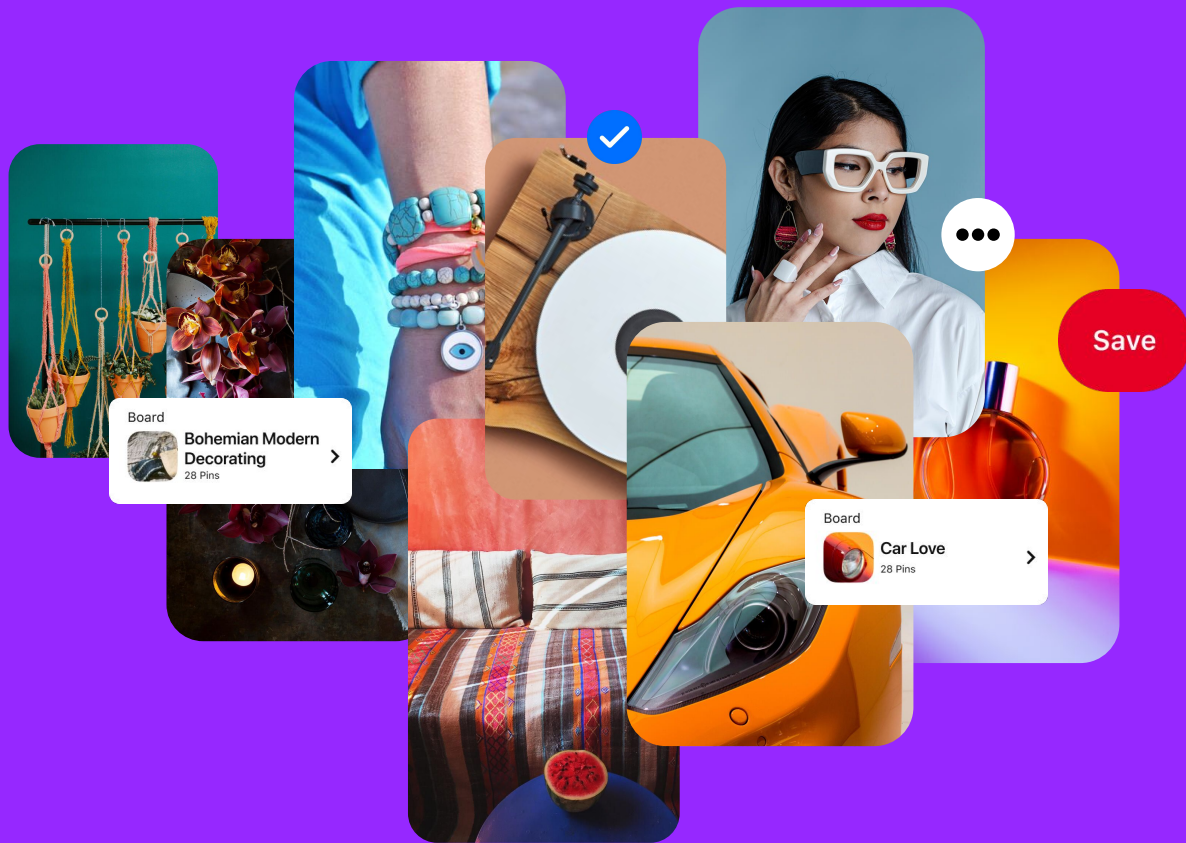


Use multi-method approaches*

* But what about time and budget and bandwidth constraints? Fair. Are there ways to get scrappy with it?



Iterate your frameworks



Key takeaways

1. Cultivate curiosity

2. Define your construct

3. Consider a research agenda

4. Get cross-functional with it

5. Go far and wide with RFPs

6. Build on the thinking of others

7. Use multi-method approaches

8. Iterate your frameworks



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