

> TIP SHEET

SELECTING YOUR EXPERT PANEL

- Draw up an initial shortlist of names from the people you encounter as you carry out your cultural brailing and your cross-cultural analysis. Experts can mean those with official titles but make sure you also include ordinary people – those who have an extraordinary knowledge of a particular subject matter or who exemplify a particular trend.
- Note down the names, job titles, areas of specialism, and attributed works for all your potential experts.
- Appraise your initial list against the bigger picture of the data assembled on your evidence wall and the questions you believe need to be answered about the trend you are validating.
- If there are gaps in your list of experts then research additional names. As a general rule, your list should draw from different disciplines and sectors, and include experts or analysts who can offer the following: a political overview, social, cultural, creative and lifestyle perspectives, an economic opinion, and even a philosophical take on the trend you are investigating.
- Research your shortlist of experts online and make a final decision as to their appropriateness for the work under investigation. Identify addresses, contact numbers, e-mail details, information about their publishers, or the academic or corporate institutions they work for.
- Before contacting your experts fully acquaint yourself with their professional biographies and their specialism (as they relate to the areas you are interested in speaking to them about), and draw up your list of questions.
- Once prepared, e-mail or write to your experts first so that they can assess their usefulness or not to your project. Phone after a few days, mentioning your e-mail or letter, and clearly outline the reasons you need to speak to them.
- Never interview your experts as a group if possible. This can create a group dynamic that dilutes the quality of the data you are collecting, and skew the collective opinions of those in the room towards the most vocal and opinionated.