

## Carine Pick

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*Carine is a Director Designate in Baker McKenzie's Corporate M&A Practice Group in Johannesburg. Carine advises private and listed companies (local and international) across a diverse range of industries, including retail, pharmaceutical, and telecommunications.*

*She has a particular focus on bidder processes, acquisitions and divestments, joint ventures, restructuring, fund formation, the formation and structure of corporate entities, strategic mergers, and empowerment transactions.*

**Q** *If you could change one thing on your career path to date, what would it be and why?*

**A** If I could change one thing, it would be that I placed greater importance on building my network, my brand and my practice as a junior. As a junior, so much time and effort is spent on meeting that billable target that there is not much time for anything else but sleep. But as you climb the ladder, you will eventually need to find the balance between networking, building your brand and your practice, and meeting the billable target.

Networking is a skill, and the earlier you start, the better. As with anything in life, having the ability to work on a skill over time, nurture it, and refine it is always the first prize. Recognise the importance of starting this development early in your career, as your first clients will likely be your peers and colleagues.

**Q** *What advice would you give a young woman working on her first deal?*

**A** Be curious, ask lots of questions, and accept that you will make mistakes.

Everything on your first transaction (and many more after) will be new, so don't be scared that you won't know much. Ask questions, and don't assume you are meant to know something, or be scared to ask because you think you should know. Now is the time to ask. You will make mistakes (many, in fact), but it is how you manage them that will show character to your team, firm and yourself.

**Q** *When things go wrong, what advice would you give about moving on?*

**A** When things go wrong, it can really knock your confidence. No matter how experienced you are, things can always go wrong; and as lawyers, with our A type, never-wrong personalities, it can be difficult to accept.

My advice is to just feel it, go through the motions and let tomorrow be another day. Tomorrow, you will likely need to give yourself that pep talk, remind yourself why you are not going to let that one mistake define the rest of your career, and then take action – adapt as required, and make improvements (if necessary). Don't let that mistake be just a mistake, but rather a learning opportunity.

**Q** *What attributes do you think are essential for a good M&A lawyer?*

**A** Teamwork and a great work ethic. Your team is your lifeline in this industry. Be good to your team, recognise when they need support, identify where there are gaps, and celebrate every single achievement (personal and professional).

Unfortunately, this life does require a certain amount of effort to succeed, so having a great work ethic goes a long way.

Lastly, an essential element is to love what you do. Find love and passion in what you do, whether it is the need to be challenged, to learn something new, or to chase the feeling of closing a transaction.

**Q** *What is one thing that makes your life easier and that you really wouldn't want to do without?*

**A** My air fryer. It is literally the best thing I have ever received. It is the most convenient thing to have in your kitchen, and it just makes life so much easier. Everything is now made for the air fryer; there is no better feeling than reading instructions on a new Woolworths product and it says - air-fry at 160 degrees for 5–6 minutes, heaven! 🍷