

Lebohang Mabidikane

Director | Competition Law



Q *What led you to pursue a career in corporate finance?*

A I think it was a natural progression for me. I am from a family of lawyers, so this has always been a career I've been interested in. Advising large corporations on their transactions leaves me with a great sense of achievement and participation in the economy in my own special way.

Q *What was the toughest deal you have worked on and why?*

A It was a deal where two parties were interested in acquiring the same asset, except that, at the time, only one of the parties had made an actual offer to acquire that asset. This was a precedent setting transaction, even though I still don't agree with some of the regulators' findings.

Q *What, in your opinion, is the hardest part of a transaction?*

A Dealing with unexpected developments in a transaction – sometimes curve balls come up, no matter how well in advance you plan.

Q *What is your favourite sector in which to do a deal and why?*

A I don't have a particular favourite sector; my favourite part of my work is knowing that I have done my best to protect and advance my client's interests – that is super rewarding!

Q *What, in your opinion, is the biggest difference between working on an external advisory team and being on the in-house M&A team?*

A In my experience, it's easier to not thoroughly test your own views when you are working in-house. But, being external counsel means that multiple clients will probe your advice, sometimes even taking it to the extent of asking another lawyer whether your advice is correct.

Q *What is your outlook for M&A activity over the next 2-3 years?*

A For Africa, I believe not even the sky is the limit. Africa is a great and growing investment environment, and although we have our problems, they are not insurmountable.

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

A I wouldn't change a thing. I have been bold in my decision making, and there's nothing that I think I should be doing but have not done. In fact, there is still more to do, so no regrets here!

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

A Pray, pray and pray some more.

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

A You are not a female lawyer, you are a lawyer, period, and a good one at that. Don't be intimidated, just show them how good you are!

Q *Did you have a mentor and, if so, what was the most important thing you learnt from them?*

A Yes, I have had a few, including my brothers, but one that always stands out is Nthabiseng Dlamini, another female lawyer. She taught me the value of giving back and passing on the skills I have acquired.

Q *Do you have a role model or someone you greatly admire and, if so, who are they and why?*

A My mother. She was not a lawyer, but she taught me the value of hard work and intentionally working towards getting what I want the right way and waiting for my turn.

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

A Decisiveness, boldness and creativity. Finding different ways to solve a problem will take you a long way.

Q *What do you do to celebrate the closing of a big deal?*

A Dinners and lunches – eat, eat and eat some more!

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

A My husband and my daughter; those two really get me, and are always looking for ways to help me.

Q *What do you do to unwind and get away from the stress of work?*

A I watch reality TV shows, LOL! Some say they're stupid and deplete the little brain cells most of us have left, but for me, they are a true escape! OK, OK, I also exercise and travel.

Q *If you could have dinner with any woman in history, who would it be and what would be the first thing you asked her?*

A Winnie Mandela. I would ask her, "how did you do it, how did you cope?"

FUN FACTS

Favourite colour: Most shades of pink

Item on your bucket list: A proper Euro Tour

Three words your colleagues would use to describe you: Loud, loud, loud!

What genre of music would one find on your favourite playlist? Amapiano! 🎧