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Q *What led you to pursue a career in M&A | the Financial Markets?*

A Early in my career, I worked at a company where my role involved buying metals that the company needed on the London Metals Exchange, and hedging the exposure. The financial side of the transactions interested me the most, so I decided that that was where I needed to be – financial markets! I really enjoyed economics at university, as well as the financial module in my MBA, so working in the financial markets seemed a logical step to apply these learnings. Each transaction is bespoke, and I feel that you can learn something new in these markets every day if you are paying attention.

Q *What was the toughest deal | listing | issue etc you ever worked on and why?*

A The toughest deals are the restructures of companies where there has been fraud. I seem to have worked on most of the big fraud-induced deal implosions in South Africa. It seems that, often, many people's livelihoods are put at risk by a few individuals' greed, and it is really tough for us to restructure a deal in such a way that as many people and entities as possible emerge whole out of the company-inflicted disaster. South Africa, with its unique economic and social challenges, is a particularly tricky environment to deal with all stakeholders' divergent needs.

Q *What, in your opinion, is the hardest part of a M&A deal | financial market transaction?*

A For bankers, it is probably persuading our credit or investment committees that our deals are not as risky as they think, and that in concluding them, we will be adding value for our clients! Bridging the gap between the client's requirements and the risk committees' requirements is often a challenge that must be handled with sensitivity and, inevitably, some compromise.

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

A Healthcare is my favourite sector, as the new technology in the underlying businesses we fund is fascinating, and I always hope that the new technology will make a difference in people's lives. The large CSI programmes that the healthcare companies have in place are a natural point at which people's lives can be improved.

Q *The M&A industry worldwide has been a rollercoaster for the last few years – where do you think M&A in South Africa is headed, given our current political, economic and social climate?*

A Investors need stability to make investments that they feel won't put funds at risk, so I'm hoping that the South African private sector can help our government to create a stable and predictable environment. With increased stability, we can then hope for increased investment and growth, which can only be beneficial.

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

A I wouldn't change anything on my career path as, although there have been some tough patches, I've learned from each experience – sometimes more learnings than I wanted!

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

A I appreciate dealing with people who have a great attitude and work ethic, and who are happy to put time and attention into distilling each aspect of a deal. So I'd say, work smarter than everyone else (but also harder), and pay attention to the detail. I would also point out that the difference in approach that women bring to this generally male-dominated environment is essential, and we must keep making a difference.

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

A I love to read, and a wonderful way to compartmentalise is a good book! I research the book prizes for recommendations to make sure that I read the Pulitzer, Booker and Women's Prizes for Fiction selections. This is a good way to ensure you are reading a diverse set of authors on widely different topics. To unwind, I also exercise every day. Every week, I swim several kilometres, run, cycle my stationary bike, and jump on my rebounder. This is such fun, and keeps me energised for the week. 📖