



DealMakers®
WOMEN 2024

Women of SA's
M&A and Financial
Markets Industry



DealMakers WOMEN 2024

Women of SA's M&A and Financial Markets Industry

Marylou Greig

Editor

In the 25 years that **DealMakers** has been tracking the transactions and advisers of the South African mergers and acquisitions industry, we have seen notable progress in the advancement of women in the workplace, particularly in the last ten years. This has been driven by a combination of legislative measures, corporate initiatives, and advocacy efforts. But it has also had much to do with the great strides that women have made in showing up for themselves, knowing their worth, and claiming their seat at the table.

National Women's Day, celebrated on the 9th of August each year, and first celebrated in 1995, provides an opportunity to pay tribute to the generations of women whose struggles laid the foundations for the progress made in empowering women and achieving gender equality to date. It is another chance for women to get motivated, inspired and to unlock their own strength and determination to make a positive change.

As a country, we have much to be proud of, and the day offers an opportunity to salute the gains attained for women, and to recognise their achievements in politics, sport, in the economy, and in academia. These women serve as positive and powerful role models that inspire young girls and defy outdated stereotypes of women's capabilities.

Ongoing efforts are needed to address persistent challenges, such as the gender pay gap, representation in specific sectors, workplace culture, and work-life balance. By fostering a more inclusive and equitable

work environment, South Africa can harness the potential of its female workforce, and drive sustainable economic growth and development.

The profiles which decorate the pages of this 4th edition of the magazine offer women words of courage and inspiration. Each woman featured has a unique story to tell and important advice to impart. Women are strongly encouraged to learn from other women who have worked hard, overcome obstacles, and gone on to achieve their goals. What is clear is that the growing matrix of experience of the women in this industry is a powerful force, one that is succeeding in uplifting those women with less experience as they themselves rise and shatter the proverbial glass ceiling.

The feature will be released at the second **DealMakers** Women's Day networking event, which builds on last year's success and will, once again, include a panel discussion. This year's panel members are Lydia Shadrach-Razzino, a Partner at Baker McKenzie; Taskeen Ismail, Chief Financial Officer at Sanlam Investment Management; Mandy Ramsden, a Director at Questco Corporate Advisory; Sindi Mabaso-Koyana, Managing Partner at AIH Capital; and Lynette Finlay, Chief Executive Officer at Amabutho Investment Managers.

My grateful thanks go to all in the industry who continue to support and participate in this feature and, in particular, to my colleague Vanessa Aitken who has spent many days and nights ensuring that it grows and evolves each year. 🙌

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www.dealmakerssouthafrica.com/dm-q2-2024-womens-feature

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by M&A Listed & Unlisted BEE Deal Flow.
by General Corporate Finance Deal Value.
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Amore Carstens

Senior Associate | Corporate and Commercial Oil & Gas Sector



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

A It is important to step back and assess the situation objectively. Address the situation with your team in a transparent and respectful manner and, rather than dwelling on the problem, work toward finding a solution or a new approach. Importantly, separate your self-worth from the situation, and avoid internalising it. What is done is done, and set backs are, in my view, an inevitable part of career growth. By learning from them and moving forward with determination and positivity, you will emerge more resilient in the long-run. Learn from the experience and reflect on how you can grow from it. By staying adaptable, focused, and true to your instincts, you'll emerge stronger, wiser, and ready to tackle the next challenge that comes your way.

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

A Prepare thoroughly: Research the company, industry and the market. Understand the terms, risks and opportunities associated with the deal. Also, don't underestimate the power of building relationships. Take the time to get to know your clients, your colleagues, and even your 'opponents'. Understand their needs, their concerns, and their motivations. This will help you navigate the deal with empathy and creativity. Think like a businessperson, not just a lawyer. Understand the bigger picture, the industry trends, and the client's goals. This will help you provide practical, commercially savvy advice that sets you apart.

Set clear goals: Define your client's objective and what you and the client want to achieve from the deal.

Seek mentorship: Reach out to your colleagues for support and guidance.

Exude confidence: Believe in your worth and the value you bring. Don't be afraid to speak up and assert yourself. Your ideas and insights are valuable, and your clients need to hear them. Your fresh perspective can be a game-changer.

Stay organised: Keep track of your documents, deadlines and communications.

Be adaptable: Be open to learning, and pivoting when necessary.

Take care of yourself: Finally, take care of yourself. Deals can be all-consuming so prioritise your health.

As exciting as it is to work on your first deal, it is a learning experience. Embrace the process, be open to making mistakes, and do not hesitate to ask for help when needed. Believe in yourself, stay focused, and enjoy the ride.

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

A I have had a number of mentors throughout my career to date, both in my professional and my personal life. I have learnt many valuable lessons from each of them, but if I had to choose only one, I think the most important lesson I have learnt is to own my space, to know that I have earned a seat at the table and that I have a voice. This empowered me with self-belief and resilience, and helped me navigate a competitive and often male-dominated area of law. It allowed me to trust my instincts, to speak up and assert myself, and to never apologise for being a strong and ambitious woman. It also instilled in me the importance of self-care and prioritising my own well-being, even in the midst of gruelling deal negotiations and tight deadlines. It showed me that vulnerability and empathy are strengths, not weaknesses, and that building genuine relationships with clients

and colleagues is the key to true success. Most importantly, it allows me to break free from self-doubt and imposter syndrome, to embrace my unique perspective and experiences as a woman in law, and to use my voice to empower and uplift others. I believe that this lesson not only helped me become a more effective and impactful lawyer, but also a more confident and purpose-driven individual, ready to shatter glass ceilings and pave the way for future generations.

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

A Close the laptop, literally! After intense focus on the deal, I take some time to unwind and recharge, by having a relaxing evening at home. I believe in taking a moment to pause, reflect, and recharge. First, I take a moment to acknowledge and journal the lessons learned throughout the process, distilling key takeaways to apply to future deals. Next, I treat myself to a relaxing self-care ritual. I also try to make time for introspection, reflecting on my personal growth and the skills I've honed throughout the deal's journey. To commemorate the occasion, I enjoy a quiet evening in with a favourite meal, a glass of wine, or a good book, savouring the sense of accomplishment and pride. By celebrating in this way, I ensure that I am refreshed and ready to tackle the next challenge with renewed energy and insight.

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

A I spend time with my family and friends, catching up on my favourite shows and trying out new recipes. If the weather permits, I book a weekend away (anywhere near the ocean), find a good book, and enjoy the quietness (and sleep). 📖



Chané Stievenart

Senior Associate | Corporate and Commercial



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

A The first time I reviewed a contract (outside of articles), I remember (to me) that the defined terms and clauses all fit together like a jigsaw puzzle (if it was a really good draft). Crafting my own contracts felt like I was creating something that needed to fit together perfectly, or it wouldn't (couldn't) work. I wanted to learn to create the most complex and intricate puzzles, and that meant M&A work. You can't separate M&A work from corporate finance law.

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

A For the last few years, I've been involved in the mining corporate commercial sector. The mining sector keeps me on my toes, and my day-to-day work interesting. In one week, I could be involved in drafting contract mining agreements (which can differ depending on the relevant mineral), or security related agreements (such as loans, guarantees, cessions and pledges). In addition, I may end up drafting various types of sale agreements (target product, shares, mining rights etc.) or be fortunate enough to be involved in extremely specialised beneficiation and plant construction contracts.

In addition, not only do I generally advise and implement transactions in line with the Companies Act, within the mining law sector, I also get to implement transactions in line with the Codes of Good Practice, Mining Charter and Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act.

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

A I would alter my belief (as a university student) that success is found in a linear career path i.e., a candidate attorney to director

path. Every time I've taken a step that deviated from the linear path (where people around me questioned the move but, internally, I had peace and knew it was the right decision for me), I've found that those have been the best decisions for my career. And every time I took a risk, I grew in character. There are no universities offering degrees in character.

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

A Finish strong. When something goes wrong, in order to move on, I think it's important to make sure that you still have a good opinion of yourself and finish strong. In other words, you have maintained your integrity and have been faithful in your convictions.

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

A Without sounding clichéd (or morose), my mentor genuinely has been setbacks, failures and disappointments. The most important thing I've learnt, and keep learning, is that the sun will still rise again the next day. Life goes on, and that means you can keep moving forward.

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

A The colleagues, peers and people I have admired throughout my career have been those consistent in character. When someone is consistent in character, when they say "yes" or "no" about a principle or view or matter, they mean it. In other words, their word means something. They are willing to take a knock or suffer a loss to maintain their word. In addition, they treat everyone the same, whether it's the tea lady or a CEO; they are consistent in who they are and how they

behave with everyone. Those are the people I admire and truly respect.

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

A Caffeine.

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 Definitely Jane Austen. I would probably ask her if, after seeing life in 2024, she would change anything in any of her classical works, and then in this same hypothetical scenario, beg her not to.

FUN FACTS

Current book on your nightstand: *The Last Lion* by Winston Spencer Churchill. It is an autobiography of one of the greatest strategists in history. My favourite Winston Churchill quote (unrelated to the book) is from a speech made on 29 October 1941, he said:

"This is the lesson: never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in, except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."

Unusual hobbies: I tailor all of my clothes.

Item on your bucket list: The Camino de Santiago hike.

Your worst trait: When something is true or the truth, always telling someone exactly what I think, regardless of the consequences. Unfortunately, even when I do manage to exercise self-control in those circumstances, my face somehow betrays me and shows exactly what I think or am thinking. 🗣️

Haafizah Khota

Senior Associate | Corporate and Commercial



Empowering Women in M&A: The Transformative Power of Female Mentorship

In the high-stakes world of mergers and acquisitions (M&A), breaking through the glass ceiling is no small feat. Women in this field face unique challenges, from implicit biases to balancing demanding careers with personal commitments.

However, one powerful force that can help women overcome these obstacles is mentorship. As someone who has had the privilege of being guided by incredible women, I can personally attest to the transformative power of mentorship.

The Journey Begins

My journey in M&A began just over seven years ago and, like many women entering this male-dominated field, I faced numerous challenges. Navigating complex deals, establishing credibility and building a network were daunting tasks. Within the first few months of my career, two remarkable women, Vivien Chaplin and Rachel Kelly, took me under their wing. Their mentorship was a turning point in my career, providing me with invaluable guidance, support and inspiration.

Mentorship, particularly from other women, can be a game-changer. Vivien and Rachel not only shared their extensive knowledge of the industry, but also offered insights into navigating the unique challenges faced by women in M&A. They taught me that success in this field requires not only technical expertise, but also resilience, strategic thinking, and an unwavering belief in oneself.

Overcoming Challenges and Celebrating Successes

The journey of breaking the glass ceiling in M&A is fraught with challenges. There have been moments when I've doubted my abilities, faced biases, and struggled to balance work

with personal commitments. However, Vivien and Rachel are always there to offer support and encouragement. Their belief in me gives me the confidence to push through barriers and strive for excellence.

One of the most significant lessons I've learned from Vivien and Rachel is the importance of celebrating successes, no matter how small. In a demanding field like M&A, it's easy to get caught up in the relentless pursuit of the next big deal. However, taking the time to acknowledge and celebrate achievements is crucial for maintaining motivation and perspective.

The Broader Impact of Female Mentorship

Mentorship has benefits that extend far beyond individual success. According to a Forbes article, women who have mentors are more likely to advance in their careers, gain promotions, and achieve greater job satisfaction. Mentors provide not only professional guidance, but also emotional support, helping mentees navigate the complexities of their careers and personal lives.

Female mentorship is widely recognised for its transformative impact on professional growth and personal development. It builds confidence and competence, fostering a supportive and empowering environment for women in M&A. As Michelle Obama eloquently stated, "Mentoring is a critical aspect of professional growth and development. It can make the difference between success and failure."

Practical Advice for Aspiring Women in M&A

For women aspiring to enter and excel in M&A, here are some key pieces of advice, based on my experiences and the wisdom imparted by my mentors:

Seek Out Female Mentors: Actively seek out mentors who understand the unique challenges you face. Their insights and support can be invaluable.

Build a Strong Network: Networking is crucial in M&A. Attend industry events, join professional organisations, and nurture your connections.


Embrace Resilience: Challenges and setbacks are inevitable. Embrace resilience, learn from failures, and keep pushing forward.

Celebrate Your Successes: Take the time to acknowledge and celebrate your achievements. It's essential for maintaining motivation and perspective.

Pay It Forward: Once you've gained experience, become a mentor yourself. Share your knowledge and support the next generation of women in M&A.

Looking Ahead

The future of M&A is bright, with more women breaking through the glass ceiling and achieving remarkable success. As we continue to champion mentorship, we pave the way for a more inclusive and dynamic industry. The support and guidance of mentors like Vivien and Rachel are crucial in this journey, helping us navigate challenges, celebrate successes, and empower each other to reach new heights.

Mentorship is not just about professional growth; it's about building a community of empowered women who support and uplift each other. By fostering these relationships, we not only achieve our individual goals but also contribute to the collective success of women in M&A. Together, we can break the glass ceiling and create a more inclusive and vibrant industry for future generations. 



Jess Reid

Director | Corporate and Commercial



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

A Take some time to understand the commercial drivers of the deal. The ultimate goal is to achieve the client's desired outcome, not to perfectly follow instructions that may be flawed. If you see an issue with your client's instructions, speak up and be prepared to offer an alternative that may be better suited to achieving your client's ultimate commercial goal.

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

A I have had the privilege of having numerous mentors involved in my career progression, from whom I have learnt countless lessons. Two that come to mind are:

Firstly, take responsibility for your own learning from day one. I believe this advice has contributed greatly to my career progression, as it encouraged me to immerse myself in all aspects of the deals I was working on from an early stage in my career, even if the tasks I was instructed to undertake were somewhat insignificant. I learnt a great deal by reading agreements and correspondence, and taking note of negotiations in meetings. These aspects of the deals contributed to my knowledge bank, even if they may not have been directly relevant to the task I was required to undertake. This increased the amount I learnt exponentially.

Secondly, in the context of being a junior lawyer in practice, remember that the partners and senior lawyers that you work with are, first and foremost, lawyers, as opposed to managers. Sometimes you need to "manage-up" in order to take true ownership of your work and the matters you are involved in. This may entail following up on a deliverable which is sitting with your senior for review, extracting action items from client emails and proactively volunteering to handle them, rather than waiting for them to be delegated to you, and initiating communication with your senior if they do not

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

A A good M&A executive will usually need to possess a variety of key attributes, but to name a few:

Financial Expertise: A strong grasp of financial statements, valuation methods and deal structuring to ensure financially sound transactions.

Negotiation Proficiency: An ability to negotiate terms, prices and conditions with the various stakeholders in the deal, whilst keeping in mind your commercial pressure points and where you may be willing to compromise.

Analytical Ability: The capacity to evaluate risks and opportunities in potential transactions and balance them appropriately.

Legal and Regulatory Knowledge: An understanding of regulatory frameworks, ensuring compliance and managing legal risks.

Effective Communication: Skill in communicating with stakeholders at all levels, internally and externally, throughout the M&A process.

Project Management: Competence in managing complex projects involving multiple stakeholders, ensuring timelines and goals are met.

Adaptability and Resilience: A capability to adapt to changing circumstances to handle unforeseen challenges that arise during M&A transactions.

FUN FACTS

Unusual hobbies: Weeding the lawn – I find it incredibly therapeutic to pop those roots out!

What genre of music would one find on your favourite playlist? With two toddlers in the house, it is undoubtedly a compilation of "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes", "The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round" and various remixes thereof.

Your worst trait: I constantly misplace my phone. I miss the good old days of landlines.

Favourite Restaurant: Gioia – it has good food, but more importantly - jungle gyms, trampolines and jumping castles - which means some peace and quiet, and quality time, for me and my husband. 🐼

Kuda Chimedza

Senior Associate | Banking, Finance & Projects



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

A I generally enjoy working on transactions in the social infrastructure space. They provide a level of personal fulfilment, in that there's a physical building or project that one can point to, as something they've contributed to for the good of society. Lately, I'm enjoying working on transactions in the energy sector, as I feel that I am assisting, in a small way, with the improvement of the country's electricity generation capacity.

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 Having acted as both part of an external advisory team and as part of an in-house team, the biggest difference I have seen is the length of involvement in the transaction's lifespan – at least from a financing perspective. As a member of an external advisory team, one is often introduced to the deal at transaction document's stage, and the role is often limited to one specific field of expertise. The role of the external advisory

team often ends at closing, and sometimes extends to signing off post-closing conditions. The in-house M&A team, however, is involved in structuring the deal, deciding on key terms of the transaction, the transaction documents stage, and the post-close life of the transaction. In-house teams have full sight of the transaction – from commencement to 'life after the deal'. For instance, if there was funding provided for the deal, in-house transaction teams will continue to be involved in monitoring the funding performance, including monitoring any covenants that may have been contracted for.

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

A Take all the learning opportunities that come your way. In addition to technical competence, a key skill for M&A transactions is understanding the reasons for the transaction and the overall intention of the parties. This is learnt through listening to the negotiations, key points of contention, and agreements reached during the negotiation stage. This allows you to tailor your advice to the deal at hand, as opposed to "throwing the (legal) book" at the parties. Your first deal (and the next few) will be a good

opportunity to ask your team a lot of questions as the transaction moves along, so that you understand why certain decisions are made, and if there may be differences in how certain matters are handled in different transactions.

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

A I spend time with the people I love, and develop my personal skills through new hobbies. In the last year, I have picked up ball room dancing lessons, taken a flight lesson, done some travelling, started reading poetry anthologies, and I'm working on becoming a dessert connoisseur.

FUN FACTS

Favourite colour: Lavender Rose.

Current book on your nightstand:

The Space Between Us (Poetry and Prose) by Courtney Peppernell and Zack Grey.

Unusual hobbies: Woodworking, specifically making household and outdoor furniture.

Preferred holiday destination: Türkiye, on a tour of the natural sites in Istanbul, Trabzon, Ankara, Izmir, Selcuk and Pamukkale. 🇹🇷



Lara Granville

Director | Competition Law practice



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

A I have done a couple of merger notifications involving parties who have previously been accused by the competition authorities of collusion, where the regulator has been inclined to prohibit these transactions on the basis of unproven allegations, unrelated to the competitive effects of the respective mergers. Those transactions have been tough to handle because the clients (understandably) feel immense frustration and a deep sense of injustice in these circumstances, and yet, one needs to continue to navigate the clients through what may feel like an Alice in Wonderland sense of absurdity.

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

A I have enjoyed working in the telecommunications sector and getting to understand the technicalities of operating networks and navigating a sector with overlapping regulatory dispensations. At the moment, I am thoroughly enjoying coming to grips with the pharmaceutical industry, and the complex web of influences in the South African healthcare sector which impact on access to healthcare and medicine.

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

A I have an appropriate amount of Jewish anxiety and pessimism, so I say, “things could always be worse”.

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

A Read, read, read. Read every transaction document; every strategic document; scan every document and website you can to research the industry and understand the business. And then think about how you would explain it all to a 10 year old.

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

A My toddler. She doesn't take “no” for an answer.

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

A I endure the stress of trying to feed and dress a toddler, so that I long for the stress of work.

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

A Coffee.

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 My mom. I would ask her for every detail of her life that she remembered. I would ask what her life was like – she loved her work and was driven by her work. She mothered three children, including a child with Down's Syndrome, and ran the family firm.

FUN FACTS

Current book on your nightstand:

The Bee Sting (Paul Murray);
Winnie and Nelson (Jonny Steinberg);
Love and Fury (Margie Orford).

Preferred holiday destination:

Anywhere with a hiking trail.

What genre of music would we find on your favourite playlist? Bach and teenage pop.

Your worst trait: Impatience. 🙄



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! 🎧



Lucinde Rhodie

Director | Dispute Resolution Department



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

A Since commencing my articles, I have been practicing in the dispute resolution space. Currently, I am specialising in corporate restructuring, from a business rescue and insolvency perspective.

There is a general misconception that in order to be involved in corporate finance, one cannot be a litigator. That is simply not correct. Disputes, restructuring and insolvencies in the corporate finance space are complex, urgent and challenging.

Dispute work, pursuant to a corporate finance transaction, can involve a myriad of legal principles, statutes and processes. I have been called upon to give advice and litigate on directors' liability, consequences of not complying with the Companies Act, 2008, appraisal rights, enforcing complex securities for creditors, advising on possible insider trading and market manipulation claims, as well as impeachable transactions. Not one day nor one matter is ever the same in a disputes practice.

One day you can advise on whether a director, in concluding a transaction, breached his/her fiduciary duties and can personally be held liable for the debts of a company, and the next day, you can be drafting urgent court papers to prevent a substantial transaction from being implemented, and shortly thereafter appearing before the Financial Sector Conduct Authority in an insider trading investigation against a client.

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

A Answering this question from a disputes, restructuring and insolvency perspective,

one must keep in mind that the advice given will determine whether a company/business continues to exist and fight its way back to financial health, or whether it will forever close its doors, with a devastating loss of employment to many persons.

To give such advice, considering all the options, is by far the hardest part of a matter of this nature. No director or owner of a business wants to be told that their business has failed, or is failing, but we must always remember that it is our responsibility to make sure the advice given and action proposed is to ensure the best outcome in the circumstances.

The converse is also true – when we are instructed to look after the interest of creditors, we are responsible for acting as quickly as possible to make sure a creditor's interest and security are protected immediately. Any delay in acting can be prejudicial to a creditor, through the loss of or damage to the asset, forming the basis of the security provided.

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

A I thoroughly enjoy the business rescue and insolvency sector. I am a member of CDH's Corporate Debt, Turnaround and Restructuring Sector. The work we do is fast paced and involves not only insolvency legislation, but all aspects of restructuring, including distressed M&A, contractual issues, company law issues, particularly directors' liability and creditors' rights, dealing with complex bonds, cessions, pledges etc in enforcing creditors' rights. Advising on whether complex transactions and payments may constitute impeachable transactions, and litigating on those legal issues, is incredibly interesting, although challenging.

Guiding a business or creditor through


the business rescue process is also very interesting. It is important for the directors of any company to understand the concept of a business being financially distressed, what their options and (more importantly) obligations are, as a board, and to assist them through this process and their engagements with the business rescue practitioners.

If you act on behalf of a creditor in a business rescue, your approach is different. Now you are advising a creditor to ensure that their best interest is looked after in the business rescue. You are required to negotiate with business rescue practitioners, make sure any security your client holds for its claim is preserved, and advise your client on the implications and consequences of any proposed business rescue plan.

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

A We all would like to think that we are perfect lawyers and that things never go wrong, but they do. Own your mistakes and learn from them. Act fast to ensure that what went wrong can be dealt with, so you can pivot and still get the best result for your client. Identify the pitfalls, as they are sure to occur again in future, and ensure that you're prepared to deal with them appropriately.

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

A Always be prepared, and always be confident in your abilities. It is important for your clients and your colleagues to know that you are competent, reliable and trustworthy. Don't be afraid to ask questions, and make use of every opportunity that presents itself to upskill and enhance your profile. 

Lutfiyya Kara

Senior Associate | Real Estate



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

A I was an integral part of the registration of a mixed-use precinct scheme known as Sandton Gate – The Terrace. CDH represented Abland – the leading South African based commercial real estate developer – and Game Camp Developments, a joint venture between Abland and Tiber Investments. We were involved from the land assembly process, where we assisted with all the sale agreements and transfers of the properties to Game Camp Developments. We also attended to the transfers of various properties sold to Abland and Game Camp Developments, including numerous consolidations and subdivisions, and the sale agreements were complex, as they had to account for complex town planning issues. This matter was tough as it required an in-depth knowledge and understanding of mixed-use developments, land and town planning challenges, the processes of the municipality, and so much more.

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

A I deal with many commercial sale transactions within the Real Estate Department, and I would say that the hardest part of any of these transactions is the drafting of the agreement of sale, as you need to ensure that every detail is considered for the parties to the transaction; to identify the possible risks for your client and how to mitigate those; and to ensure that all the terms of the agreement are properly worded, so that all parties to the agreement are on the same page and understand what is expected of them to bring the transaction to fruition. This requires a thorough understanding of commercial concepts, as well as understanding your client's needs within the scope of the transaction. In this regard, you

have to be a really good communicator and people person.

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, I would believe in myself at an earlier age or stage of my career, and I would have applied for jobs at “bigger firms” than where I started out doing my articles. I always doubted myself and believed the words of my superiors during my articles, that the “bigger firms” would not be a fit for me, due to my personal circumstances. Once I gained the courage to put myself out there and apply for a job at a “bigger firm” – and got the job! – I realised that I was more than capable of excelling in my area of expertise, despite my personal circumstances.

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

A My advice comes from personal experience: feel the disappointment of what has gone wrong for that moment, be it a day or two, but do not dwell on it long enough to allow it to consume you. Give yourself a period to feel the negative emotions, and then force yourself to move on from it. Understand that one negative moment does not define your whole career. We are all humans, capable of mistakes; even the most experienced commercial attorney makes mistakes. Learn from that moment and use it to fuel you even more to do bigger and better things.

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

A Do not doubt yourself or your capabilities. You studied this field and have sufficient knowledge in it, so believe in yourself and

dive in with full confidence. Research the work given to expand on your knowledge, and ask the necessary questions from seniors in your team when you need guidance. There truly is no such thing as a stupid question. Asking every question as you go through your deal can save you from making a mistake which can cost the client.

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

A I truly admire Naledi Pandor. She is a woman who does not waver on her stance, who speaks with clarity, intelligence and grace on any issue that she takes on. I truly do aspire to be a woman in a leadership position one day, with her traits, as she is the epitome of the qualities a true leader should have.

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

A Being in the Real Estate Department, a Conveyancer really needs a great and competent conveyancing secretary or secretaries. Having an experienced secretary who understands the work truly does help with the work flow – getting it out faster – and allows you, as the conveyancer, to go out and bring in more work. I would not be able to be a successful conveyancer without the assistance of a great conveyancing secretary.

FUN FACTS

Favourite Colour: Purple.

Item on your bucket list: Skydiving.

Preferred holiday destination: Zanzibar. 



Megan Rodgers

Director | Oil & Gas Sector Head



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

A Lawyers in corporate and commercial law often play a pivotal role in shaping business decisions and strategies, with corporate and commercial law frequently involving international transactions and cross-border issues, offering exposure to different legal systems and cultures. These aspects were particularly appealing in my decision-making process. Added to this, abstract thinking and practical problem-solving have always been my strengths, so I trained as an upstream M&A corporate and commercial lawyer. For the past decade, I have been fortunate to have a fulfilling and fast-paced career in this unique area of law.

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

A The oil and gas sector is an extractives industry and energy focused sector – this is my favourite sector. I work with frontier energy companies, major and supermajor energy companies, as well as national oil companies and regulators with upstream mandates. An upstream oil and gas skill set is cross-border and translatable, and I have had the opportunity to work on M&A transactions and oil and gas development projects in over thirteen countries, and across four continents.

Q *Thoughts on energy diversification in South Africa?*

A Energy in South Africa should be viewed from an Africa perspective. It should never be separated or viewed in isolation from the African continent as a whole. Regional integration through shared infrastructure domesticates the use of natural resources, promotes bankability, and changes the value proposition for investors by providing access to a larger market. In addition to this, the African


continent must be allowed to pursue energy diversification in order to reduce dependence on any one source of energy, achieve energy security, create access to energy, and address energy poverty. Africa, and South Africa, requires a combination of energy sources in order to meet its energy consumption needs. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), Africa accounts for less than 3% of the world's energy-related CO₂ emissions to date, and has the lowest emissions per capita of any region. In 2021, 43% of the population of Africa — about 600 million people — still lacked access to electricity, and of this number, 590 million reside in sub-Saharan Africa. This energy deficiency will continue to grow as the population growth outpaces access to energy, and access to electricity, specifically. It is an immediate and absolute priority for Africa to bring modern and affordable energy to all Africans. This can only be achieved through utilisation of all available energy resources. In other words, net-zero does not, and cannot, start at zero, at least not for Africa. Although the urgency for action to mitigate the risks of climate change is no longer debatable, the need to eradicate energy poverty on the continent, and recognition that developed and developing countries have different socioeconomic challenges and have contributed disproportionately to GHG emissions, is equally not debatable. The solutions are, by no means, one size fits all. The landscape for each country is diverse, and there is no single strategic response that will make sense for all. A balance must be struck, and while the developed nations disincentivise investment into fossil fuel exploration and production, Africa should be incentivising such investments, while simultaneously incentivising the development of all other energy sources. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to ensure a stable and unwavering regulatory environment

for investors through clear policy directives which promote an energy mix, and legislative certainty.

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

A Industry analyst Rystad Energy reports that after hitting a record \$258m last year, upstream merger and acquisition (M&A) activity continued its momentum at the start of this year. With \$64bn worth of upstream deals announced in the first quarter of this year, deal value reached its highest first-quarter levels since 2019, and a near 145% increase compared to the opening quarter last year. Notably, deal value so far this year has already surpassed the total deal value of \$69bn recorded for the entire first half of 2023. With more than \$150bn worth of upstream assets on the market, M&A activity in 2024 is expected to remain robust, and the current indicators suggest a favourable environment.

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

A Confidence in your abilities will help you navigate negotiations and discussions effectively. Imposter syndrome is a common experience; many successful people, including high achievers, experience imposter syndrome, but it's important to recognise that imposter feelings are not necessarily reflective of reality. So, prepare thoroughly. Understand your clients' business and the deal, and plan for all potential outcomes. Do not hesitate to speak up when you have something valuable to contribute. Whether the deal succeeds or not, every experience is a learning opportunity; remember that failure is a pitstop on your journey and never your permanent destination. Give yourself permission to learn every day, to make mistakes, and to break down new barriers. Finally, learn to accept compliments and celebrate your achievements, no matter how small they may seem. 

Natasha Fletcher

Counsel | Real Estate



Q What led you to pursue a career in Real Estate?

A I fell into Real Estate, quite by accident. I passed Matric with exemption but was not sure what I wanted to study. Law had always been on the horizon. I enrolled at university to do a Bachelor of Arts degree with a view to changing course once I was certain, but just before I was due to start the semester, I decided I didn't want to go to university without being completely certain of what I wanted to study. "Money doesn't grow on trees".

My Dad was adamant that I would not go out into the world with just a Matric and so I enrolled at a secretarial college for a year's course to learn to type, do shorthand, bookkeeping and other secretarial functions. Some subjects included legal documents and aspects of conveyancing. After the year at college, I was employed at a law firm in the real estate department as a junior secretary. My passion for conveyancing was ignited.

After a couple of years in the real estate department, and helping out in the litigation department, I was sure that I wanted to study law. My Dad informed me that he had already paid for my tertiary education and if I wanted to study further, I had to pay for such studies myself.

I duly enrolled at Unisa to do my LLB and continued working as a secretary in the real estate department. It was hard going and, if anything, taught me perseverance and the value of time.

After graduating, I continued to work as a secretary in the real estate department until I

started my articles of clerkship. Even though I had been exposed to other aspects of law, I still gravitated towards conveyancing.

I wrote and passed the four Board Exams, the Notaries Exams and the Conveyancing Exam while serving articles. One of my proudest moments was the day I was admitted as an attorney, notary and conveyancer.

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

A Take a breath, drink a good cup of tea and take stock. Look at what went wrong, and possibly why. Assess whether there had been a way to avoid things going wrong – sometimes there was no other option at the time. Be honest in your assessment of any role you may or may not have played in things going wrong. Be proactive in finding the best possible solution. In time, discuss with peers and/or seniors what they would have done differently. Learn from it. Don't keep going back to all the wrongs and the what ifs, or you will never move forward. Strive to do better.

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

A Trust in your abilities and your instincts. Take it step by step. Ask questions for clarity where you are unsure, and more importantly, ask for guidance or assistance when you need it. Don't be too hard on yourself (others may be) when things don't go according to plan; learn from it, grow. Be patient and kind to yourself. Put in the time and effort, you may not see the reward on your first transaction but, down the line, you will.

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

A My late maternal grandmother and grandfather. My grandmother worked hard all her life, but remained a loving, humble, non-judgmental, God-loving person. She did not have an easy life, but always looked to the positive rather than the negative. My grandfather was blinded in an accident when he was 21, but that did not stop him from working, nor did it stop him from servicing family and friends' cars. He was generous to a fault. These, for me, are core values of a worthy person and I continuously strive to be the person that would make my grandmother and grandfather proud.

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

A My favourite way to unwind is a road trip, even if just for the day. An early morning start, breakfast on the road (bought or packed), out of the city and into the country. Within an hour or two on the road, I can usually feel the tension leave my neck and shoulders.

FUN FACTS

Current book on your nightstand: *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *The Wild Rose* by Jennifer Donnelly.

Item on your bucket list: A Trans-Siberian railway journey.

Preferred holiday destination: South Africa or Europe.

Favourite colour: Shades of pink. 



Rachel Kelly

Director | Corporate and Commercial



As a child, I'd always wanted to be a lawyer – I liked the idea of wearing a suit, heels and carrying a briefcase – but I was put off when I was (erroneously) told I would need to learn Latin! I'm not very strong on the languages front. I decided to pursue accounting instead, only to find out that I was not particularly good at it. So, on completing my BCom, I decided to do an LLB on the basis that I wasn't going to take it too seriously and, if I didn't like it, I would just drop out and figure out something else to do. Fortunately, I loved law from the start, especially Corporate Commercial and M&A work. People think law is really difficult and, yes, it is hard work (and a lot of reading), but I think a lot of it is instinctive and just putting in consistent effort and graft.

While I love getting involved in transactions, the hardest part for me is when the “deal fatigue” sets in, and you are negotiating technical points on draft 12 of the agreement (often at 10pm). The best deals, and the nicest ones to work on, are those where both parties walk away with, substantially, all that they wanted, and where there haven't been too many tears and tantrums along the way. It's also great closing a deal – you get a sense of satisfaction at “job done “. We like to close off our big deals with a lunch or dinner with our clients (assuming they aren't sick at the sight of us at that point).

I think, particularly as a woman in law, it's

important to surround yourself with good people; people who you can learn from and people who have your back. Law is a tough field, and having people around you who are like-minded and can give you some perspective during those times that you need it is invaluable. Plus, if you have friends you can talk to, laugh with and count on, it makes the whole thing a lot more fun.

I have been very fortunate to have had many mentors during my career. Many of them have taught me technical points of law. Many of them have taught me practical ways of doing things, how to manage people, and how not to take it all too seriously. Things do sometimes go wrong and everybody makes mistakes, but it's generally not a matter of life and death. It's important to keep a sense of perspective, own your mistakes, learn from them and move on. I once heard it said by a senior lawyer that it's only when you get to about 50 years old that you actually start to know what you are doing, so there's a lot of us in the same boat who aren't always confident that we know what we are doing! That's normal, but you do learn more and more each day.

When I'm not working, you'll find me spending time with my two kids and six cats, in the gym (when I am tired of the two kids and six cats), hiking, or volunteering at the SPCA. Sadly, I can't adopt any more animals (I would love many more cats) but I try to make a difference by raising money for them. I'm also not ashamed to say that I like binge watching

Netflix series – the Last Kingdom is one not to miss (one of my cats is called Uhtred)!

The one thing that makes my life easier and that I wouldn't want to do without is my air-fryer! It makes it so much easier to make food quickly, which is helpful when you are working and don't have hours to stand in the kitchen and cook.

Working at the SPCA Book Nook, I have a lot of access to great books from a myriad authors, but my favourite author is probably Ken Follett (his cathedral series is fantastic) and I always have at least one of his books on my nightstand. My favourite colours are blue and pink, although the majority of my house is painted grey (I have very little imagination in the interior design space). In terms of holiday destinations, I would love to visit Florida. My kids are interested in rockets and rocket science and, obviously, they have a lot of that there. They also seem to have a lot of theme parks and entertainment. My worst trait is probably summed up best by a meme that a colleague sent me: “*Best quality: works well under pressure. Worst quality: doesn't work otherwise*”. I do sometimes struggle with sitting at a desk for several hours a day and concentrating on pages and pages of documents (which are sometimes very complicated) but, unfortunately, that's part of the job, so I have to get on with it! I like working from home because at least then I have my cats around to distract me when they do silly things (and the fridge is close by). 🐾

PROFILE

Samantha Kelly
Counsel | Real Estate Law



Finding the Balance

POV: *It's pre-COVID January 2020. My husband and I have been happily married for a couple of years and want to start a family. The problem? I am a practicing attorney! How do I balance being a mom and also being an attorney in practice? Should I start looking for a new job outside of practice?*

Many women, including myself, find themselves having to face the giant wall that rises in the middle of their career: the maternal wall. The maternal wall is a reality, and having children has proven to be detrimental to a woman's continued career as a practicing attorney. Research has indicated that, in South Africa, women constitute 57% of new entrants admitted into the legal profession, but only 47% are practicing, and 28% are partners, in comparison to their male counterparts, who constitute 72% of partners.

Fast-forward 4+ years later... I have two beautiful children, and I am still in practice. Have I sacrificed my career to become a mom? No! Have I sacrificed motherhood for my career? No! So, what's the secret to finding the balance between being a practicing attorney and a mom? There is no magic formula; however, we are seeing more "tools" being made available to working moms, to help create some balance between having a career and being a mom.

Remote/ hybrid working arrangements and flexible working hours: The COVID-19 pandemic came with many pitfalls and negative consequences. However, one of the few silver linings that it brought about was the shift in workforce arrangements. A new "industrial revolution", if you will, which showed us the possibilities of remote working and flexible working arrangements. This, in particular, has

made it easier for "working moms" to have a bit more flexibility and balance. As we move away from the traditional working model of being in the office from 8am to 5pm, 5 days a week, it has now become acceptable to work from home (or anywhere, really, that has an internet connection!) and on flexible hours (including those sweet, quiet hours in the morning before the house wakes up, or an hour or two in the evening once the kids are in bed). This gives us a greater ability to fit in time during the day to fetch kids from school or to work from home when we have a sick child at home.

Alternative career roles: Traditionally, the goal in an attorney's career is to achieve partnership status. However, we are seeing more and more law firms moving away from the traditional hierarchical career paths, creating more "alternative career roles" in practice (for example, becoming counsel or a professional support lawyer). The introduction of these alternative career paths is an incredibly progressive step, and a great tool for people who want to stay in a law firm and practice, but not necessarily work their way up to becoming a partner (which is not to say that they cannot become a partner at a later stage in their career).

Reduced working hours: Legal practice still largely subscribes to "the billable hour". As such, one of the biggest tools that can help create some balance in one's working life is having a reduced working hours arrangement (and, accordingly, a reduced budget). For example, instead of needing to work eight billable hours a day, only having to work five billable hours a day, and having your budget pro-rated to these hours. This gives parents a few extra hours in a day to attend to other family commitments (like the school drop-

off or collection, taking a sick child to the doctor, or attending a dance recital) without the pressure and guilt of not writing fees during that time.

Client management and expectations: The legal profession is a service profession, and the role of clients and fulfilling their demands are central to the practice of law. Attorneys are generally under pressure to avail themselves to their clients, as and when demanded. In this regard, I have found that managing clients' expectations is key. That it not to say that you need to broadcast your personal working arrangement to your clients, but rather to manage their expectations on your time and availability to attend to instructions (for example, accepting an instruction at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and advising the client that you will attend to it first thing the following morning).

Support for the home: Realistically, most of us need additional support on the home-front to be able to continue to have a career, whether it is an au pair to assist us with the kids during "core" working hours or grandparents to help with school pick-ups. The old adage that "it takes a village" rings true!

Support from work: At the end of the day, most of these tools are ineffective without the support of the firm you are working for, and the team that you work with. We are seeing more and more firm policies put in place which support the "working mom", which is a step in the right direction.

While there is still a long way to go before there is true equality for the working mom, we can appreciate that we have come a long way in creating ways to regulate the "work / mom / life balance". 🙌



Simone Dickson

Consultant



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

A I'm not a corporate finance lawyer in the strict sense, but rather a technology lawyer that advises on corporate finance transactions from time to time. I am fortunate enough to have landed in the technology law sector by chance, which completely changed my career path and exposed me to opportunities I would never even have considered as a young attorney. I have never looked back, and what seemed like a mountain to climb at the time, made me realise that sometimes the career path you are focused on only provides a limited view of possibilities, and may not be meant for you. I was a dispute resolution lawyer previously and, although I enjoyed it, corporate transactional work allows me to utilise my creative side. I love drafting agreements, crafting the script to reflect the intent of the parties, and resolving stumbling blocks through words. A leap of faith and trying something new may lead you to a place you never imagined pursuing – I have become a believer in trying the road less travelled, and that anything is possible with the right mentors, hard work, an appetite to learn, humility, tenacity and determination. I love what I do, and am grateful for the challenges that this sector presents. Evolving technologies and new risk factors do not allow us to simply “rest on our laurels” – there is always something new to learn. Technology lawyers have to keep up with the pace of technology, and often need to think on our feet to find practical, pragmatic solutions for clients while

addressing risk. I am certainly not a ‘techie’, but do need to understand how things work so as to assess the risk to the client.

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

A Technology and telecommunications, of course – these are my areas of specialisation. I also enjoy being involved in retail sector transactions, partly due to the fact that I am a shopper at heart! I enjoy most sectors though, particularly as technology is now a critical service and forms an essential role in most, if not all, sectors.

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

A To not take things so seriously. Appreciate the opportunities that come with being a junior professional, being able to participate in meetings, learning from senior colleagues, trying your hand at drafting various pleadings and agreements, and finding a place for yourself. Without trying a few things (even those that don't initially pique your interest) you won't know what legal practice can actually offer you as an individual. There really are so many different options available to legal professionals, all of which should be explored to find your fit. Unfortunately, I think this appreciation only comes with time. I only realise now, looking back, that the things that I felt “rocked the boat” actually led me to where I was meant to be. This doesn't mean that it has been easy;

it has taken hard work: working on believing in myself, my abilities and having a voice to express them.

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

A This is a tough one. As lawyers, we are perfectionists by nature, and don't easily accept things going wrong; however, humility, acceptance and the ability to dust yourself off, learn from what happened and try again tomorrow is essential in this profession. Easier said than done. I have had my fair share of bad experiences, but we are all human, and bound to make mistakes. Owning up to those mistakes and ensuring there is always clear communication is so important, and constructive criticism should be accepted and valued. A thick skin is also necessary in this game, particularly in negotiations with tough opponents and a variety of personalities! Respect for others, and not taking these things personally, goes a long way.

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

A Fitness is a big part of my life, and I make sure to move at least once a day. I enjoy running, yoga, and strength training. I also prioritise time with family and friends – quality time is the best time. I love grabbing a skinny dirty chai at my favourite local coffee spot most mornings, and a glass of bubbly at sundown. If I manage to stay awake, I can lose myself in a TV series, and try to read at least a page of my book every night! 📖

Tessa Brewis

Director | Finance, Banking and Projects



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

A I am fortunate to have worked on M&A deals across a variety of sectors, and I have learnt something from each of them. If I have to pick a favourite, it would be the projects and energy sector, and the renewable energy sector in particular. The transactions are usually complex and require large multidisciplinary teams to cover the legal, financial, technical and environmental aspects. I also admire the entrepreneurial nature of the developers and sponsors who have identified opportunities to develop energy projects, taken major risks, closed projects and then eventually sold them to longer term investors. There is an enormous need for power and infrastructure in South Africa and the rest of Africa, and I expect that this is where we will see significant investment opportunities and deal activity in the future. I also enjoy the fact that I am playing my small part in the just energy transition and the fight against climate change.

Q *Have you ever mentored anyone and, if so, what was the most important thing you learnt from that experience?*

A Mentoring is passion for me and I have always loved it. One of the most rewarding aspects of my career has been to mentor younger lawyers who have either been part of my team or worked with me on transactions. Three very talented women in particular come to mind – Inge Scheider, who is now Senior Legal Counsel at British International Investment, Elnalene Cornelius, who is now VP Legal at Scatec Africa, and Gabi Mailula who is a partner at ENS. I have seen them grow from being mentees to role

models, and I have so much admiration for what they have achieved. Being a mentor requires reflection and self-awareness, and I have often realised that advice I want to give my mentees is, in fact, advice that I also need to reinforce or hear for myself.

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

A The incredible team of lawyers that I work with at CDH. I know that my colleagues are experts in their field, I can rely on them and their expert advice, and together, we've got this.

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

A My advice would be to come to terms with the fact that things sometimes do go wrong and to seek a practical efficient solution. It's not about never making mistakes; it's about identifying and fixing your mistakes, and learning from them. Resilience is one of the most essential qualities you need to develop as an M&A lawyer. I also recently saw the following quote by Banksy that sums it up very well – "If you get tired, learn to rest, not to quit."

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

A After working on a big deal, I like to spoil myself by spending some

chill time in my garden, also with my husband and our two dogs. As an M&A lawyer, time is probably your most precious commodity, and just being able to relax at home at the farm is a luxury.

FUN FACTS

Favourite Colour: Duck-egg blue.

Current book on your nightstand: *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese.

Favourite restaurant: Zest Deli & Kitchen at Beaumont Wines

Unusual hobbies: My husband and I live on a farm, so we have lots of hobbies – one of the most fun is keeping our own bees and harvesting the wonderful honey ourselves.

Preferred holiday destination: Anywhere in the Kruger Park. 🇿🇦

