



Mamedupi Matsipa

CEO

Q&A

Q What led you to pursue a career in Private Equity?

A I knew very early on in my banking career that I wanted to end up in the investment industry and spent the rest of the time building the skills and establishing the relationships to help me get there. Unfortunately, this was not as linear as I had hoped it would be at the time. After my varied career path (from IT to Investment Banking), private equity was finally the career "home" where it all came together and made sense. I love getting to understand what drives industries and companies, and how to create value. Each day, I am able to consolidate and tap into all that I have learnt throughout my career, from transaction modelling all the way to serving on boards and helping companies think about their digitisation strategies.

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

A Every transaction has its challenges and nuances, and even after many years of doing deals, I am still challenged and learn new things. Ultimately, at the heart of it all is people, and I have found that a transaction becomes tough if the parties have misaligned values or competing interests, without a willingness to meet each other halfway. From a structure perspective, I have found that even the toughest transactions eventually get over line when you have a common purpose and work together to get there.

Q What, in your opinion, is the hardest part of a PE deal?

A People due diligence. We are in the long-term partnership game, and one of the

key contributors to whether an investment is a success or not is the relationship you have with your partners or management teams – value can be destroyed very quickly if this goes sour. Unlike the financial, tax or the legal, I believe this is the toughest part of due diligence, especially after only a few interactions and then the requirement of a binding offer. Also, when the fundamentals of the transaction and company still stack up, it's very hard to call a transaction based on a hunch you have about your future partners or management team, but the lesson I'm continuously learning is to trust my gut.

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

A I did not see myself in the entrepreneurial space early on in my career, but I have thoroughly enjoyed it and have grown and learnt so much more than I probably could have done if I had stuck it out in corporate – I would not change anything.

Q What piece of advice would you give a female entrepreneur looking for funding?

A Firstly, in the private equity context, key in this environment is the ability to showcase a track record, expertise, and the ability to source and execute transactions, drive growth and returns, and deliver impact. Secondly, you need to be able to articulate what your unique value proposition is, what sets you apart from your competitors, and how you will address your funders' key needs. Lastly, it's important to leverage off your key networks and resources; this provides a platform for mentorship and guidance in the

industry and your business, as well as potential access to transactions and other funding sources.

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

A At Ata Capital, we have a school bell that we bought to ring when we celebrate key milestones. So, when we close a big deal, we ring the bell!

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

A I enjoy interior design and gardening; tapping into the creative side of my brain is a great way to check out of the demanding day-to-day.

FUN FACTS

Favourite Colour: Black.

Current book on your nightstand: I typically have more than one book on the go at a time, but making the time to read them is always a challenge. I have just finished *Angel's Demise* by Sue Nyathi, which was a book club read. And now I'm trying to get through *Spare* by Prince Harry (because I'm a closet follower of the British Royal Family), and have just started *What it Takes* by Stephen Schwarzman, which is a recommendation from an industry colleague.

Item not yet completed on your bucket list: Bungee Jumping or Sky Diving.

Preferred holiday destination: Anywhere with a beach and shopping. 📍