



Q&A



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

A I did not know exactly what career I would have early on in my life; even during my time at UCT, I was still not entirely certain where I would eventually land up. I started my career as a Candidate Attorney at CDH. During this time, I was drawn to the corporate and commercial department, and undertook three rotations in the department. I have always had a passion for problem-solving, interacting with people and project management, and these passions, mixed with the excitement and complexities that come with M&A deals, has kept me in the corporate M&A space, six years later.

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

A In 2022, I had just made the move to ENS and was placed in the core deal team advising Petronas on the disposal of its 74% interest in Engen to a subsidiary of Vitol. A move to a new environment is never easy, and leaving the office at 4:00 am on your first day is telling. The due diligence for this transaction spanned seven African jurisdictions, and we had prepared a seller's version, bidders' deal team version and bidders' clean team version of the vendor due diligence reports (across the seven jurisdictions) within approximately two and

a half months. The transaction involved, amongst other things, a closed tender process requiring interaction with the various bidders, W&I insurance, an extensive disclosure exercise, regulatory approvals, including competition approval from the South African, Botswanan, Namibian and COMESA authorities, and an intensive seven-day negotiation session hosted at a location in the Western Cape. This was one of the most exciting deals I have worked on, but definitely one of the toughest, due to the different legs of the transaction, and the need for the parties to complete the transaction in a limited timeframe.

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

A You are going to be okay. This is an opportunity to learn from those experienced around you, and the first step to gaining experience which you will be thankful for during your next deal. Always aim to be the most prepared in the room, and don't be afraid to voice your opinion to your team. You have worked hard to be where you are, so take a seat at the table (or the MS teams call), and be confident in your abilities. At this stage of your career, it is also important to stay adaptable and leverage off the experience around you.

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

A I have been lucky enough to have a number of incredible mentors (many of them women) in the South African M&A world, who are now scattered across the M&A scene at various internal and local law firms, and as in-house counsel to large corporations. The most important thing that I've learnt from them is that you can be an excellent M&A attorney, confident in your abilities and always striving to produce excellent work, and at the same time, you can have a fantastic and fun life outside of your career. It is so important to find the right balance early on in your career.

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

A I love travelling, and exploring new places, so if I am not on a plane taking my annual leave, I am in the car on my way to a weekend away somewhere around the Western Cape. I also enjoy hiking, running, yoga and a gym work-out as a great outlet from the stress of a day or week. 🙌