



Q&A

Tanya Landman
Head - Corporate Broking
Standard Bank

Was there a pivotal moment or influence early in your life that shaped your interest in finance?

Throughout my school career, I always had a natural ability and enjoyment for maths. The options I explored for my undergraduate studies post school were vastly different, ranging from accounting to graphic design to psychiatry. However, my strong affinity for maths and accounting ultimately led me to study a BCom Accounting and obtain my Chartered Accountant qualification, which was instrumental in opening doors across the finance and banking space at the time.

What did your path into corporate finance look like – was it intentional or did you discover it along the way?

My move into corporate finance was intentional. However, my desire to enter this field was only clear a few years after I finished articles, and once I'd had the opportunity to travel, work abroad and experience different cultures. My first permanent role post articles was in structured asset finance at a UK bank in London. After moving up from a middle-office role into a client facing position, I realised my passion for client engagement, financial analysis, and the excitement of working in the "city". At the same time, a few of my friends and ex-colleagues had started to pursue careers in corporate finance – it sounded challenging, but very exciting, to work on deals that made the front page of newspapers. I felt that the corporate finance field could provide me with a steep learning curve and opportunities to excel. I chose to move back to South Africa, and secured a role in a corporate finance team at an international investment bank. I gained invaluable experience in my foundational years in corporate finance – in M&A, equity capital markets and sponsor services – before moving onto more diverse roles in investment banking, and on the client-side at a corporate.

My move into corporate broking was, however, less deliberate. Due to the broad experience I obtained throughout my career in corporate finance, equity sales, investor relations, shareholder value management and strategy, an unexpected but welcome opportunity in corporate broking presented itself. I jumped at the opportunity to consolidate my broad skill set in this sub-sector of corporate finance, where I could apply a particular fondness for capital markets and add value for clients through strategic equity advice in their pursuit of delivering long-term sustainable shareholder value.

How have you built resilience in a high-pressure, male-dominated environment?

While the investment banking industry is male-dominated, particularly at the more senior levels, I am fortunate to have worked in diverse environments with supportive leaders and teams, where I haven't necessarily felt the need to prove myself just because I am female. Corporate finance is very competitive and demanding; to build and maintain resilience, I have had to learn to manage expectations, not to be overly sensitive in high pressure situations, to be adaptable within reason, and to continually remind myself of my achievements and true worth.

How have you balanced your personal life with the demands of a career in finance?

I have found that my need for balance has naturally evolved as my career and personal life have progressed. I was fortunate enough to be able to take a career break to focus on my young family. The return to work and demands of being a full-time working parent have required continual planning and prioritising, discipline, managing expectations, and a strong support network at home. Consistent performance and delivery at work, and an approachable and accessible attitude with your team and clients is also critical to build trust, affording the flexibility required to achieve balance.

Did you have any mentors or role models? How did they influence your journey?

I have had several informal mentors throughout my career, starting from my time at university. These have taken the form of leaders, colleagues, friends and family. Their support, guidance, and honest, objective advice have been pivotal and influential as I have navigated the various stages of my professional and personal life.

What advice would you give to your younger self starting out in this field?

The hours can be long, work demanding, and timelines seemingly unrealistic, but it is worth it in the end. The experience and knowledge you will gain is invaluable and transferrable across fields, combined with exposure to multiple sectors, transactions, products and clients. Seek out a mentor, and learn to manage expectations early on; be inquiring, be consistent, build your professional relationships, and most importantly, make time to maintain and lean on your personal support network. 