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### EVERSHEDS SUTHERLAND

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

A The short answer is that Mergers & Acquisitions found me, and I wouldn't have it any other way. After my matric exams, my career choice was either law or psychology. I enrolled at UKZN PMB campus for my LLB and took psychology as an elective. Although I excelled in the psychology exams, I decided to pursue a legal career, as it aligns with my values and personality, especially my desire to attain justice in the world.

Upon completing both my LLB and LLM (Business Law) degrees, I commenced articles of clerkship at a Durban firm before being retained as a litigation associate. Following my admission as an attorney, I decided that it was time for a change in legal practice and to expand my skills, and I was given the opportunity by Eversheds Sutherland (KZN) Inc. to practice in their Corporate and Commercial Department. By making this change, I was exposed to M&A work and enjoyed the diversity of this field, carrying out due diligences, reviewing and drafting agreements, finalising transactions, and liaising with clients. It's a pity that M&A didn't find me sooner.

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

A Dealing with clients, counterparties and opposing counsel can be challenging, as each party to a M&A deal understandably wants the best for themselves and their client. Navigating risk assessments in a M&A agreement is of paramount importance, in respect of your client's best interests. Usually, there are various versions of agreements, and with each new version, certain items must be assessed and dealt with, meaning that M&A attorneys need to critically navigate the draft agreements.

In my opinion, the challenge is to know when to concede certain issues and when to push back and stand firm in your approach. As the saying goes, you need to "choose your battles". I am fortunate to work with an incredible team of people who collaborate with each other, and each one brings their individual expertise to assess, critically discuss and assist with ideas and issues.

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

A As a perfectionist, I previously struggled to celebrate achievements because I was overly critical of myself. However, as I have gained experience, I have allowed myself to be proud of what I have achieved, and grateful for the opportunity to better myself.

After congratulating our client and the counterparties on the deal, I usually celebrate with a glass of champagne or wine with our client, which often progresses to a congratulatory meal.

On a personal note, I do enjoy treating myself to something that I have wanted for a while. I believe the reward is much sweeter if you had to work hard for it. I enjoy a visual representation of the work I've put in and the progress I've made as a M&A attorney. On closing M&A deals, I have bought a leather satchel, items of jewellery and went on holiday, to name a few.

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

A The best piece of advice I would give is to perfect organisational skills, as this will be critical for keeping on top of everything. It is easy to become overwhelmed with the magnitude of a transaction. However, if you are organised, and prepare trackers or "to do lists", it will greatly assist you to ensure that nothing falls through the cracks. As part of your

organisational skills, a system must be adopted whereby important deadlines, as well as items to follow up on, are diarised, and follow-ups are attended to continuously.

One should always learn from each M&A transaction and absorb the knowledge being imparted by partners and senior staff who have experience in M&A deals. Regardless of experience, there is always something to learn or to upskill yourself with, and this opportunity should be taken advantage of.

I would also advise young women to have confidence in themselves and their ability, and not to be intimidated by working with other experienced counterparts; rather, learn from them.

### FUN FACTS

#### Current book on your nightstand:

*12 Rules for Life* by Jordan B. Peterson and *Think Like a Monk* by Jay Shetty. These books are read interchangeably, depending on my mood.

#### Items not yet completed on your bucket list:

A trip to India to see the Taj Mahal; meeting David Beckham (former professional footballer) and AB de Villiers (former South African international cricketer), and buying a Chanel handbag in Paris.

**Preferred holiday destination:** In South Africa, it must be a game reserve trip. Those game drives are so exciting, with everyone keeping their eyes peeled to be the first person to spot an animal. My preferred holiday destination outside of South Africa is Venice (although I have only been there once). There is a calming atmosphere, and it is so serene.

#### Three words that your colleagues would use to describe you:

Diligent, efficient and compassionate. 🗣️