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Q *Where did your corporate finance journey begin, and how did you end up where you are today?*

A I'd had a keen interest in financial markets from an early age, and that prompted me to pursue a Business Science degree specialising in finance and economics. I found the dynamic and evolving environment surrounding financial markets to be fascinating. I joined Absa (then Barclays Africa Group) through the Rising Eagles Graduate programme in 2016. My first role in the organisation positioned me to be involved in project-based solutions, where I was an analyst in Global Finance and Transactional Banking. My true passion was to pursue my interest in Global Markets. This inspired me to join the Equity Research team as an associate involved in coverage of the South African Retail sector. Through 2019 and 2020 I assumed lead coverage on several South African retail stocks. I was assiduous and self-motivated in my role and gained the tutelage of industry experts. I actively set a structured plan for achieving my career goals. My career evolution includes initiating research coverage on the South African Food Producers and HPC sector at Absa in 2021, and I continue to advance my contributions in this space.

Q *Did you have a mentor at any point in your career? If so, who were they and what did you learn from them?*

A I have been fortunate to have had mentors at different stages of my career, who showed an interest in

my learnings and career growth. My mentors over the years have included line managers, business leaders, and adjacent industry specialists. I acquired different skills and lessons from my mentors, owing to their unique personalities and specialisations. A few lessons I can share include the importance of taking initiative in your role; the difference that innovation can make; and the significance of finding your niche. Underpinning these learnings are collaboration and principles that govern the decision-making process.

Q *What are some of the most memorable deals you have worked on?*

A I have had many highlights in my career, and I look forward to more in the future. My most significant achievement and contribution to research so far was the initiation of coverage across the South African Food Producers and HPC sector in 2021. This endeavour marked the culmination of an incredible journey for me within the research franchise. The ability to create and headline a comprehensive research report, an investor roadshow schedule and sector coverage within the Absa franchise was certainly a significant accomplishment. The sector initiation and my collective coverage efforts over the next few months resulted in attaining a top three ranking in the Food Producers category and winning the Young Analyst of the Year Award (for a written company report) at the Financial Mail Top Analyst Awards 2022.

Q *How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your work or career?*

A The COVID-19 pandemic changed how I executed my responsibilities. Early in the pandemic, I adopted work-from-home protocols and continued to engage with my colleagues and clients through virtual platforms. I found alternative ways to provide stakeholders with access to industry insights by switching hosted conferences and events to webinars. As we continue to ease back to normalised operational methods, the pandemic has informed us of some new ways of working – including hybrid work locations, increased virtual interactions and technological advancements. This experience has enhanced my capability to adapt to change by applying an agile framework while maintaining high levels of customer and colleague engagement.

Q *What advice would you give to young women who are looking to enter the corporate finance market?*

A As Michelle Obama said: "There is no magic to achievement. It's really about hard work, choices and persistence." Possibilities are endless, so harness your passion and skills into achieving your goals. The world of finance is dynamic, challenging, and rewarding, and if you are passionate enough, I encourage you to experience it. Demonstrate confidence and trust in your abilities, talent, and potential. Seek challenges. Take initiative. Remain motivated to achieve both personal and career growth. Similarly, inspire those around you, and make a difference in your surroundings. 