Q&A

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Who was the first person in the industry to take a genuine bet on you, and how did that sponsorship change the trajectory of your career?

I have been fortunate to have several mentors throughout my career, but the person who changed my trajectory is my team leader, Megan Rodgers. She intentionally invested in my development and, early in my career, I was given opportunities to work directly with major international energy companies on matters that would normally have been reserved for more senior lawyers. Rather than shielding me from complex work, she expected me to contribute meaningfully, trusted me to engage directly with clients, and allowed me to develop my own relationships.

That confidence accelerated my development far more than any formal training programme could have done. It forced me to become technically excellent, commercially aware, and comfortable making decisions under pressure.

More importantly, it taught me that this type of mentorship is ultimately about trust. A sponsor lends you their credibility. When someone is prepared to say, "I trust her with this client" or "She should lead this matter", they are taking a personal risk.

That experience fundamentally shaped how I now lead. Whenever possible, I try to give junior lawyers genuine ownership of work, rather than simply involving them in it.

There is a difference between a mentor and a sponsor. Have you had a sponsor, and how did that dynamic work?

Absolutely.

Mentors have helped me navigate difficult decisions, refine my technical skills and think strategically about my career. Sponsors have done something different; they have spoken positively about me in rooms where I was not present.

Some of the most significant opportunities in my career came because senior leaders advocated for me behind closed doors, recommended me for client-facing roles, included me in high-profile transactions, and trusted me with responsibilities beyond my level of seniority.

What made those sponsorships effective was that they were built on mutual accountability. Sponsorship is not simply someone opening doors indefinitely; it requires consistently delivering when those opportunities arise.

I have always viewed sponsorship as something that must be earned through reliability, responsiveness and quality. Once someone places their reputation behind you, your responsibility is to justify that confidence every single time.

As I have progressed into leadership, I have become much more conscious of how influential those conversations behind closed doors can be. Sometimes advocating for someone who deserves an opportunity can be more impactful than providing another piece of career advice.

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As a successful leader now, what standard do you set for yourself when it comes to mentoring the next generation of female analysts and associates?

The standard I set for myself is simple: I want junior lawyers to leave every matter more confident than when they joined it.

That means investing time in explaining not only what we are doing, but why we are doing it. Technical excellence is important, but understanding commercial context is what ultimately develops trusted advisers.

I also believe in giving people meaningful responsibility earlier than they expect. The best learning happens when someone owns part of a transaction, attends negotiations, drafts key documents and presents directly to clients with appropriate support behind them.

Equally important is creating an environment where questions are encouraged. In highly specialised industries like upstream oil and gas, nobody knows everything. Curiosity should be rewarded, not viewed as weakness.

Finally, I try to lead by example. Professionalism, preparation, integrity and kindness are qualities that juniors observe long before they are taught.

What is the most rewarding piece of advice you've ever given to a younger colleague that you watched them successfully put into practice?

One piece of advice I often give is to look beyond what the client is asking, assess the deal construct and anticipate what the client will need.

Technical ability matters, but clients remember the lawyer who delivers consistently, communicates proactively, anticipates potential issues and next steps, and can be trusted when matters become challenging.

I've watched several junior colleagues embrace that mindset. Instead of trying to impress through complexity, they concentrated on preparation, responsiveness and taking ownership. Over time, that reliability translated into greater responsibility, stronger client relationships and increased confidence.

It is incredibly rewarding to watch someone realise that long-term careers are rarely built on a single brilliant performance. They are built on consistently exceeding expectations over many years.

Peer-to-peer support is vital. How do you build a strong network of allies among other women working in law, audit and banking to support your transaction pipelines?

The transactions I work on are multidisciplinary by nature. Successful deals require lawyers, bankers, accountants, technical consultants and regulators working collaboratively.

Some of the strongest professional relationships I have developed have been with women across those different disciplines. Rather than viewing each other as competitors, we have become trusted sounding boards who share knowledge, introduce opportunities, and celebrate each other's successes.

Building those relationships takes consistency, rather than networking for networking's sake. It comes from delivering quality work, following through on commitments, and maintaining genuine relationships long after transactions have closed.

Industry initiatives like DealMakers Women are valuable because they create opportunities for those relationships to develop organically. The stronger our professional networks become, the easier it is to open doors for one another throughout our careers.

Ultimately, collaboration creates stronger outcomes for clients, and a more supportive profession for everyone.

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