

## Sarshnee Pather

Prime Services: Client Coverage,  
Absa Corporate and Investment Banking.



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

**A** When I left school, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I wanted to study Accounting, but my career path wasn't clear. It was at university I was exposed to Investment Banking by my Economics professor. I was enthralled by the complex and dynamic nature of the industry. When I completed my studies, I was very fortunate to embark on my investment banking journey with UBS and later RMB. In 2008 I joined Absa on the Foreign Exchange Trading desk. Since then, I have worked on product development, governance and regulatory implementation and business strategy as part of Absa's Markets COO team. And in 2014, I moved into Markets Prime Services which helped me expand my career to include being a trusted adviser to Hedge Fund clients as a Client Services Manager.

**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 worked with and to have been mentored by incredible individuals. They all possessed mixed attributes.

The ones that particularly stand out are Peter Taylor and Christine Clark. They both influenced my move to Front Office. They coached me through many situations and were role models on how to be a successful woman in a predominately male-dominated environment. The most distinct learning was to focus on moving forward to preserve longevity. Always keep the bigger picture in mind and tackle problems by being practical.

**Q** *What is the biggest / most complex transaction you have worked on so far in your career?*

**A** I had the privilege of working on many deals throughout my career. My most memorable was when I worked on the sale and migration of RMB business out of Dublin to Johannesburg. I enjoyed the entire experience including the exposure to deal structuring, due diligence, legal, regulatory, economic, and accounting considerations. Working with the Head of Markets gave me a true appreciation for benefit of decisive leadership. This was a trait I tried to embrace throughout my investment banking career.

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

**A** The pandemic made me realize just how quickly things can change, particularly the economy. I appreciated the fact that to grow a sustainable career I had to learn new skills and practice resilience. Additionally, it was important to make time for myself. Navigating the uncharted territory imposed new stresses on my team. Not everyone was surrounded by a family ecosystem. This pushed me to explore new ways of work to promote communication and connectedness. We embraced technology mostly however, when possible, I created the opportunity to connect face to face.

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

**A** Always back yourself, you are your biggest supporter. The industry is already littered with many challenges, do not allow fear and self-doubt to hold you back. Remember the world is dynamic and you must be agile to learn and unlearn. Most importantly surround yourself with varied colleagues, friends, and family. This will allow for a more diverse life experience. 

