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

A After my articles, I started off practising law for about two years in a relatively small firm based in Pretoria. During this time, I worked on a matter which involved another law firm based in Johannesburg which advised on complex transactional matters. I was fortunate enough to be granted an opportunity to join this firm and it offered me a greater understanding of and exposure to transactional law. This was a certainly a key step in my career journey as it gave me a better understanding of the broader areas of law and the opportunity to work on complex transactions, whilst being part of an international law firm.

Despite it being an international law firm, it had a small presence in South Africa, and therefore the exposure was limited although it offered a range of general legal services. It was during my time there that I discovered my passion for corporate law. This framed my decision to move to a firm with a much bigger presence and operations in the country with a particular focus on mergers and acquisitions.

The next move was to an international firm with a bigger presence in South Africa, where I worked for a number of years and was eventually made Partner. The experience gained there is certainly a big contribution to the lawyer I am today. However, after much search for wanting to practice the law I enjoy and at the same time build something meaningful with a purpose far beyond my own, I explored the opportunity to set up a law firm and, of course, ended up joining likeminded - industry friends and colleagues to set up what is today known as CMS South Africa.

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

A I've definitely had mentors during the course of my career and each one played an important and very special role at the time. Many played supporting and guiding roles which helped with my growth and gaining particular technical skills, expertise and experience in the area of law I am involved in.

More recently there has been an individual who has played a significant role in not just empowering me as a lawyer but also as a businesswoman. Mentorship is a critical part of enabling career and personal progression; I believe that no matter how much experience you have or how old you are, there is always something you can learn from someone else, and support and guidance is something that will always be needed and goes a long way in continuous personal improvement. I'm grateful to have had many people who have supported me throughout my journey.

Q *What, if any, hurdles did you have to cross in an industry that has traditionally been male-dominated?*

A The reality is that in the beginning the industry was very much seen as being male-dominated but I think the scales have improved and are continuously improving. The representation of women in the corporate sector is on an upward trend. It has generally been a challenge as a young female lawyer navigating the industry but I am thankful for the progress we are making and the support we provide for each other. The increased recognition in the industry and by clients for the need to have more diverse representation from gender, age and race perspectives, has

certainly assisted in this regard. Women in the industry continue to advocate for fair participation and offer a lot of support for young and upcoming female players; this will certainly assist in breaking barriers that still exist.

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

A I have worked on many deals but I find excitement in deals involving fairly new companies setting up or companies exploring different opportunities. The hunger they have and the opportunity they see to succeed makes the deal so exciting and reaffirms the hope and opportunities out there. And when such deals are supported by young, diverse and transformed teams of advisors it makes the experience so much more memorable.

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

A I think the most important advice I can offer to young women is that they need to have confidence in their abilities and skills. Enter the market knowing that while there is still much to learn, and growth to be attained, there definitely is space for one to flourish and there will be opportunities to do so. Secondly, support is accessible when one raises one's hand. It is also very important to be vocal: the extent of the participation and the value one brings relies on raising one's voice. Do not be intimidated by anyone and anything. We are all here to make a difference and all our contributions (no matter the size) assists in making that difference. If one goes in with an attitude like this, everything is more doable. Lastly, always remember to grow others as you grow too. 🙌