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Q *Where did your corporate finance journey begin, and what led you to pursue a career in the space that you are in?*

A After completing my articles at the National Treasury, I qualified as a chartered accountant and subsequently joined Absa Bank Limited as an investment banking analyst in the debt team in 2017. The knowledge gathered during my articles enabled me to better understand South Africa's economic complexities, enhancing my knowledge of the country's regulations, fiscal policy as well as their asset and liability management. Joining Absa as an analyst provided me with valuable exposure, allowing me to be sector agnostic while gaining a broad range of experience in investment banking. The accumulation of knowledge and experience that I gained pushed me to continue on my present career path as a senior debt transactor in my team. Investment banking is an exciting space for me, as it is a field of constant evolution and provides the opportunity to continue to develop your skills and knowledge to keep up with changes in the industry.

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 enough to engage with several insightful mentors, who have assisted me in navigating the difficulties facing young black women in banking. They taught me to take charge of my career and development, finding meaning in whatever I do as I forge my path, rather than waiting for someone to rescue or pick me. My mentors and I have a continuing relationship, and they

have consistently sponsored and supported me throughout my career.

More importantly, my mentors have offered me constructive criticism and suggested areas of improvement. In my experience, it is best to have mentors that have a variety of experiences and are also knowledgeable about your industry because they can frequently offer a fresh perspective on various issues.

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

A I have been fortunate over the last 24 months to have been the lead and/or co-lead of the debt transactions in what I consider some of the most transformative transactions in the South African landscape. In the IHS sale and leaseback transaction of MTN South Africa Towers, Absa provided an end-to-end investment banking solution by not only being deal advisors but also providing debt funding for the acquisition. This transaction led to IHS becoming the largest independent tower operator in South Africa, and the fourth-largest multinational tower company globally. The other highlight is the Harmony multi-tranche, multi-currency, sustainability-linked, and green loan facility, which was the largest syndicated ESG loan in South Africa and went on to win deal of the year at the 2023 African Banker Awards, and ESG deal of the year 2023 for Bonds and Loans.

Q *What, in your opinion, is the hardest part of structuring deals?*

A Managing the expectation gap and striking a balance between the bank's

and the client's needs, while ensuring that all stakeholders have a voice at the table. I have found that the ability of a transactor to develop innovative solutions, engage in difficult conversations, and maintain solid relationships will often result in the best outcomes for all stakeholders.

Q *What piece of advice would you give a young woman joining your team?*

A Your individuality is what makes you unique and creates a more well-rounded team, so remain authentic in all you do, always striving to be the best version of yourself. Investment banking is a high-performance area with some strong personalities, so you need to work hard, play to your strengths, take ownership of your growth, network, and be tenacious. Your ability to persevere in the face of adversity will lead to your success, and when you progress, lift as you climb.

FUN FACTS

Current book on your nightstand:

Atomic Habits by James Clear – it essentially provides a practical guide to forming healthy habits so that you can accomplish more by focusing on less, becoming better every day.

Preferred music genre:

Rhythm and Blues (R&B).

Preferred holiday destination:

The bush, or anywhere that there is a beach.

Three words that your colleagues would use to describe you: Agile, sincere and diligent. 🎧