

# Q&A

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

**A** I entered the M&A industry as a communications analyst, coming from a financial journalism background. I then progressed to a research role, which complements my skillset.

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

**A** I perceive hurdles as being part of perfecting my skills in the workplace. I keep focused on the goal/ task at hand and draw teachings from the interactions I have with all my colleagues.

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

**A** All deals I work on come with unique teachings but my biggest and most memorable transaction was that of a U.S. provider of career-based simulation lessons to the school and college market. I worked on this transaction while the world was in the heat of the COVID-19 Pandemic when most learners were being introduced to virtual learning in South Africa. The target company offered virtual lessons that equipped learners at school level with skills to start and run and manage successful businesses. This is a skill that is needed in South Africa where youth unemployment is widespread. It made me realise the contribution that entrepreneurs can have on the wellbeing of society and the economy.

**Q** *Which deal challenged you the most and why?*

**A** Entrepreneurs are resilient and remain optimistic despite economic headwinds. They deserve to get all the worth of the companies that they have built. It gets challenging for all parties

working on a deal when a great company doesn't get the traction it deserves from the market because of the timing of the deal. I have seen this across a number of deals. This forces an M&A team to rework its approach towards the deals.

**Q** *What has been the Best and Worst day in your career so far?*

**A** My best days are when my team gets positive feedback from clients and when our effort leads to a deal closing successfully. Every other day in some way, leads to my best days.

**Q** *What advice would you give to other women thinking of entering the M&A and Financial Markets industry?*

**A** Put in the time and effort to be the best version of yourself in this industry. Women come with a unique set of skills to this industry.

**Q** *What would you like to see change in the M&A industry?*

**A** I would like to see an industry that is vibrant with more female-run companies. This industry can open growth opportunities for a lot of women-run companies, but we only work on a handful of such transactions. This is a gap that needs to be addressed. I would also like to see more youth-run companies on the playing field.

**Q** *What would you like to be your contribution to the M&A industry?*

**A** Underpinning most M&A activity is the opportunity to have increased access to capital to build bigger companies that will benefit from economies of scale. I would like my contribution to making it easier for entrepreneurs to realise the full benefits of getting their companies ready to be taken to the next growth levels.

**Q** *Did the COVID-19 pandemic with the various lockdowns, changes in*

*working habits etc. bring about any major changes for you from a work / career perspective?*

**A** The virtual workplace encouraged me to look at different communication styles when building and maintaining relationships with clients and colleagues.

**Q** *What are three words you would use to describe yourself?*

**A** Independent, open-minded, and curious.

**Q** *What qualities would you say are essential for a woman to thrive in the M&A industry?*

**A** Communication skills, adaptability, continuous learning, taking initiative and maintaining your drive.

**Q** *What would you say to another woman who was thinking of changing fields because the industry is so male-dominated?*

**A** Own your career choice, be intentional about honing your skills, and cultivate relationships that will help you succeed in your role.

**Q** *What is one goal you have set yourself for 2022 and are you on track to reach it?*

**A** I am working on creating a brand for myself in the M&A industry, eventually being a go-to resource in my field. This is a career-long process, but I have set small targets to get to a version of where I would like to be by the end of the year.

**Q** *What is your go-to power song?*

**A** I'm Coming Out – Diana Ross

**Q** *What book are you reading at the moment?*

**A** Win! Compelling Conversations with 20 Successful South Africans by Jeremy Maggs. 