Q&A

Sinesipho Mvovo

Senior Manager | Transactions & Corporate Finance
EY-Parthenon

Blueprint for the next generation

What would you say to a young woman looking at the long hours and intense pressure of M&A and thinking, "I don't know if I can do this"?

I would tell her that the feeling is completely normal, and that almost everyone in this profession has experienced it at some stage in their career. The profession is demanding. There are long hours, high stakes, tight deadlines, and moments where the pace feels relentless. But feeling challenged does not mean you do not belong. More often than not, it means you are growing.

Looking back on my own journey – from completing my articles, moving into corporate finance and valuations, pursuing the CFA programme and, more recently, stepping into a Senior Manager role – there were many moments when I questioned whether I was ready for the next step. What I have learnt is that growth often arrives before confidence does. If we wait until we feel completely prepared, we may never take the opportunities that ultimately shape us.

My advice is not to ask yourself, "Can I do this for the rest of my career?" Ask yourself, "Can I do this today, and can I learn something from it?" A successful career is rarely built in one giant leap. It is built through thousands of small moments where you choose to show up, learn, adapt and keep going.

Support, preparation, faith and consistency have carried me much further than self-doubt ever could. The experiences that felt the most intimidating at the time often became the ones that accelerated my growth the most.

You do not need to have everything figured out on day one. What you need is curiosity, resilience, humility to learn, and the courage to keep showing up. The room does not demand perfection. It demands people who are willing to learn, embrace challenges, and continue growing through them. In my experience, those qualities matter far more than having all the answers from the start.

How do you advise young professionals to build a visible personal brand in an industry that often prioritises behind-the-scenes execution?

I would advise them to start by being excellent in the work, but not invisible in the process. In corporate finance, much of the effort happens behind the scenes: analysis, model reviews, research, drafting, and late-night problem solving. However, visibility is not about self-promotion for its own sake. It's about making your contribution understood.

Build a brand around reliability, judgement and curiosity. Be the person who follows through, asks thoughtful questions, understands the "why" behind the numbers, and communicates clearly. Over time, that becomes your reputation.

I also believe in sharing your learning journey. My own professional brand has increasingly centred on growth, learning, and enabling others. I am energised by curiosity and by seeing potential realised in people. A visible brand does not need to be loud. It needs to be consistent, authentic, and connected to the value you bring.

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The traditional 'rite of passage' was grinding through hours of manual financial modelling and data room sorting, tasks AI now handles in seconds. How must the training and expectations for young women entering corporate finance right now evolve in this new landscape?

Training must move from simply teaching analysts how to process information to teaching them how to interrogate it. AI can accelerate modelling, research and data organisation, but it cannot replace judgement, scepticism and commercial reasoning.

Entry-level analysts still need strong technical foundations. They must understand valuation principles, accounting, financial statements and transaction mechanics. However, the expectation should evolve from "Can you build this manually?" to "Can you assess whether the output makes sense?" That means training analysts to challenge assumptions, identify inconsistencies, understand industry drivers, and communicate insights clearly.

AI should create space for deeper thinking, not shortcuts. The analysts who will thrive are those who combine technical capability with judgement, ethics and curiosity. In my view, the future analyst is not less skilled because technology is available. She must be more discerning, more commercially aware, and more confident to ask better questions.