



# Q&A

## Maanda Mashego

Senior Associate – Corporate team

Webber Wentzel

### What did your path into this field look like – was it intentional or did you discover it along the way?

It was definitely more of an organic discovery, rather than something I intentionally pursued from the outset. My first meaningful encounter with M&A work came during my articles at Webber Wentzel. As part of my training, I had the opportunity to rotate between two dynamic corporate teams, both of which were involved in deal-related work. That hands-on exposure was invaluable. The environment was fast paced, the learning curve was intense, and the stakes felt very real. But I quickly realised that I thrived in that kind of setting. The complexity and collaborative nature of deal-making excited me, and from that point forward, my career began to orient itself naturally in that direction.

### What was your first deal or transaction like, and what did you take away from it?

Although I can't pinpoint the very first transaction I worked on, I clearly remember the first deal I was involved in from its initial stages through to completion. It was a cross-border transaction between South Africa and the United States, which meant working across vastly different time zones. That brought about a fair share of late nights and early mornings, and sleep definitely took a backseat. The pressure was high and the pace relentless, but it pushed me to adapt quickly and build resilience. More than anything, it was the first time I saw myself not just as a junior team member, but as someone capable of adding real value in a demanding and complex process. That deal gave me the confidence to see myself as a dealmaker in my own right.

### What's the hardest lesson you've learnt, and how did it shape you?

Rather than being a hard lesson in the traditional sense, the most transformative realisation I've had is that career choices are deeply personal and multifaceted. It's not just about the team you're joining or the technical role you're filling – it's about how well that choice aligns with your long-term personal growth, your values, and the kind of life you want to build outside the office. This understanding has shifted how I evaluate opportunities. I now gravitate towards roles and environments that challenge me, encourage continuous learning, and allow me to show up fully as myself. Choosing growth and meaning over immediate comfort or short-term convenience has been empowering. It's made me more intentional, more fulfilled, and more grounded in my career journey.

### What does self-care look like for you, and how do you prevent burnout?

Jokes aside, the cornerstone of my self-care is getting enough quality sleep (lots and lots of it); it's something I genuinely prioritise and protect. Without it, everything else unravels. In addition to rest, I carve out consistent weekly time for spiritual connection and community through my church cell group. It's a grounding space where I can reflect, reset, and be supported. On a more physical level, I treat myself to a Thai massage about once a month; it's my way of releasing the physical tension that can accumulate from sitting at a desk or carrying mental stress. These routines, though simple, are deeply restorative and help me stay mentally sharp and emotionally balanced.

### Did you have any mentors or role models? How did they influence your journey?

I've never really been drawn to formal mentorship programmes or the idea of having one singular role model. Instead, I've found myself learning the most from authentic, informal relationships with the people around me. These included friends, colleagues, and even family members – people who are driven, thoughtful, and navigating their careers with intention. I also host a podcast called *Voices of the Fraternity*, available on YouTube, Spotify and Apple Podcasts, where I interview professionals across diverse fields. Through these conversations, I'm constantly absorbing insights on leadership, growth and purpose. Even though the guests may not know it, many of them have mentored me through their stories and reflections. These experiences have shaped how I think about success, and have enriched my career path in powerful ways.

### What advice would you give to your younger self starting out in this field?

Take every chance you can to learn, whether that's through short courses, mentorship conversations, networking, or simply observing others in action. Don't wait until you feel "ready" to stretch yourself. Start investing in your growth early. Build your skillset, ask the awkward questions, and put yourself in rooms that challenge you. Most importantly, don't let self-doubt silence your voice. There will be moments when impostor syndrome shows up uninvited, but remember – you are already more capable than you think. Your instincts are sharp, your contributions matter, and with time, your confidence will catch up to your competence.

Believe in yourself, and your growth will follow that belief. 

**WEBBER WENTZEL**

in alliance with > **Linklaters**