

Q&A

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Q *What does your current role entail, and tell us about your journey to this position?*

A As the head of legal for the investment banking (IB) business, I am responsible for legal risk management and delivery of legal services to IB, which includes being counsel to its leadership team. I manage and lead a team of senior lawyers, the majority being specialists in their respective fields.

My career started at Webber Wentzel where I worked with two of the firm's leading female partners. Our practice group worked closely with the securitisation teams at each of the major banks. This opened the opportunity to join Standard Bank's Debt Capital Markets team focussing on product development, structuring and executing transactions.

In this role I gained extensive experience across the spectrum of capital market structures, instruments and asset classes.

Q *Did you have a mentor at any point in your career? If so, what did you learn from them?*

A I have had a number of mentors throughout my career, each of whom have provided uniquely valuable guidance. My mentors have guided and advised me through management challenges, provided career guidance and encouraged me to be courageous.

My most valuable mentor experience was when it felt like a mutually beneficial relationship. I take all of this into my own mentoring relationships.

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

A South Africa's debut USD500,000,000 sukuk issuance. The transaction involved multiple parties and covered numerous principles of South African, English and Shariah law. The experience reinforced my belief that Standard Bank provides a world class offering to its clients, equivalent to its international peers.

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

A Many years ago, I worked on a transaction with a key client of the bank whose deal team seemed to use bullying as a tactic to get their way. It was particularly challenging to partner with a client whose style of engaging was at odds with my values. I learnt the importance of having a close partnership with my internal deal team colleagues.

Q *What hurdles (if any), have you had to overcome in an industry that has traditionally been male-dominated?*

A Having the confidence to share the female perspective without feeling like I will be criticised / labelled by men and women as the self-appointed

'women activist' in a negative stereotypical way. I continue to work on this.

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

A Hardworking, direct and considerate.

Q *What are three words your colleagues would use to describe you? Would you agree with them?*

A Composed, diligent and honest. I agree with these.

Q *What qualities would you say are essential for a woman to thrive in the investment banking industry?*

A Don't let the fact that you are the only woman in the room hold you back. Occupy your space and be assertive. Share your perspective when you think the majority are headed in a direction which may be perpetuating a bias. Work on your relationships with your male counterparts. They can become your biggest allies.

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

A This is your opportunity to change the narrative. To introduce diversity and a critically important perspective. Be part of the change you want to see!