



Janine Wright
Deal Associate



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

A I have always been fascinated with entrepreneurship and business. When I started my career with KPMG, I was fortunate to be assigned to a Development Financial Institution, which spiked my intrigue in entrepreneurship further. Throughout the years, I moved into banking, Venture Capital, structured finance and impact funding staying close to, and feeding, my entrepreneurial interest. Now in sell-side M&A, I have the opportunity to be part of the most important aspect of an entrepreneur's journey – what and when is the next step for their business? It is a privilege to be a part of this journey and one must be committed to the task; take it with the seriousness it deserves and give it your best.

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

A No one deal is the same as the next and challenges spring from all directions. Whether internally, within the organisational operations, finances, and ownership; to external economic climate and timing. Being able to keep a finger on the pulse of these risks, pre-empting them and finding mitigants is all in a day's work. I have personally found that the most challenging aspects of crossing over the finish line is managing emotions. Managing each stakeholder's expectations and ensuring that there is alignment and communication throughout the process. This space we play in is emotional. It has to be. This is years of a person's life invested in their business, and they are taking a leap into the unknown. One must factor in and be prepared for uncertainty and fear. So often, we get to a point where you are close to closing, and one party throws a curveball. This type of irrational behaviour stems from fear and uncertainty. Engaging, understanding the situation, unpacking this, and finding

solutions are what will carry the deal over the line. I think that as women, this is our "superpower". We are so good at "considering people's feelings" and understanding expectations; it is second nature to us. So, when we are told that we are too emotional in the workplace – own it. Because there is value in that trait.

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

A I would describe myself as hardworking, dedicated and committed. I must see a task to completion and give it my best in executing it; no matter the size, complexity, or stature. Looking back at my life I can see those influences in the women in my life. I come from a background of very strong women. They did not let their lack of education or opportunity deter them from putting food on the table. They made their own opportunities and possessed the highest level of emotional intelligence and wisdom. I can only imagine the force they would be had they had the opportunities I had. There is still a long way to go for women to solidify their position in finance. I believe we are making strides in the right direction. Celebrating the small wins gives us the fuel to continue our mission to build and develop ourselves, each other and set examples for those to come.

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

A My colleagues have described me as driven, disciplined, and unflappable. Whilst I can immediately relate to some; I have had to work on many. Firstly, I had to look up the meaning of "unflappable" and immediately took my thoughts to a duck in water – calm and cool to those looking on but peddling like hell under the water! I am thankful that my colleagues see me in this light. This means that I am gaining traction in areas of my personal growth and development. I am a supporter that environment plays an important part in one's character and am grateful to have

colleagues that allow me to be the best I can be.

Q *What are the biggest changes you have seen in the industry in the course of your career?*

A There have been several "Big" industry changes throughout my career. We saw changes in policy, tighter controls, and stringent monitoring post the financial crises of 2007.

Perhaps the most recent industry change is examining the impact of COVID. COVID impacted not only the industry, but the way we operate in the industry. Virtual meetings took front seat in ensuring business continuity. This, coupled with home schooling and the inability to rely on takeout food put multitasking to the next level, bringing rise to burnout. It was a profound experience and we have worked through it.

Now, we are left with scars and need to find ways to contribute and re-build our economic environment. Unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa, the fastest growing region in the world, fell by 8.5%, putting 32 million people into poverty. Being in financial services, one feels a sense of duty to pull their weight and re-think opportunities. Using our strengths as a region to attract investment and drive business, we can competitively perform. We have a stable financial sector. We have skilled and experienced people. We have an entrepreneurial mindset. We can attract foreign direct investment and build our economy. But in order to effect this change, we must execute and remain accountable.

Q *Do you have any unusual hobbies?*

A Nothing unusual. I enjoy macrame. My mother has a saying "Never let your hands go idle". She constantly has a project going, knitting, puzzles, gardening. With these nuggets instilled, behaviours are formed to keep the mind challenged formulating goal-oriented tasks. 