

MEET THE WOMEN IN SA'S M&A

About the journey to gender equity

Corporate law firms and M&A teams are not historically known for having significant numbers of women or being led by them – but the reality at Webber Wentzel is different.

Sally Hutton, Managing Partner at Webber Wentzel:

Webber Wentzel is (and has been for some years) the leading major South African law firm on gender, with the highest proportion of women partners. Our ambition is to achieve a 50/50 split of the total partner body by 2025. Currently, 43% of all our partners are women, 57% of our legal services team are women, and women comprise more than 40% of our senior leadership team. We have been deliberate in ensuring diversity in all our leadership structures and we can see the results in our decision-making and the firm's success – diverse teams find more robust and creative solutions.

The firm also benefits from many senior women partners who are leaders in their fields. 31% of all women ranked in Chambers Global 2021 from all law firms operating in South Africa come from Webber Wentzel. IFLR Women Leaders 2021 also recognised more women at Webber Wentzel than any other law firm in South Africa.

This is important from a role modelling point of view – we all need role models at all stages of our careers.

In 2015 the firm formulated and implemented the Webber Wentzel Gender Strategy, a formal, multi-pronged strategy which is designed to create a more inclusive, enabling and gender-equitable environment. The gender strategy is overseen by the Gender Strategy Working Group (GSWG) which is a sub-committee of the Board. I chair the GSWG, so it receives attention at the highest level. In 2020, we became the

first South African law firm to adopt the United Nations Women's Empowerment Principles (UNWEP) – not only for the symbolic importance of a public commitment of this nature but also because the UNWEP provide a useful objective framework for any gender strategy.

We were the first firm in South Africa to introduce parental transitional coaching in 2016 (for which we were awarded the African Legal Awards Diversity Award). We see parental coaching as a family requirement so it is offered to both parents.

We also introduced a flexible working policy three years ago and have since expanded it. We are currently workshopping a hybrid working policy for the post-Covid-19 world. We conduct regular pay analyses. We have also reviewed all the firm's policies to eliminate any gender biases, including our parental leave policies and bonus policies.

Every quarter, the GSWG compiles a transformation profiling report, focusing on the business development and profiling of women fee earners. We are deliberately being more inclusive in the way we pitch for work and profile our lawyers. We regularly conduct unconscious bias workshops and awareness sessions.

Most importantly, though, we have a values-based culture which forms the backdrop to everything we do. The values of respect, transformation and diversity, collaboration and teamwork are all core firm values which we insist are lived by all of our people.

ABOUT THE M&A TEAM

Ziyanda Ntshona, Corporate Business Unit Head:

Within our corporate M&A team alone we have 20 women partners (out of a total of 49). They include women in leadership roles and women who have led some of the highest-profile deals on the continent.

These are the women role models for our future lawyers in the M&A space. We also have an incredibly talented and diverse group of junior lawyers who support our partners on deals – ensuring that we deliver a superlative service to our clients on all their deals.

100% of the Webber Wentzel lawyers ranked in Chambers Global 2021 (South Africa) - Corporate/M&A: Private Equity are women and 33.3% of the Webber Wentzel leading individuals recognised by Legal 500 2021 (South Africa) - Corporate, Commercial and M&A are women.

For the last 7 years, a woman has been chosen to lead our Corporate Business Unit, which is the largest and highest revenue generating Business Unit in the firm. Safiyya Patel was the Corporate Business Unit Head from October 2014 to August 2020, and I took over the role in September 2020.

Many of our core sectors are also led by women, including our Financial Services, Consumer, TMT, Private Equity and Infrastructure and Transport sectors. Women make up 53% of our sector leadership teams.

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SOME FACTS THAT SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES:

- > 57% of our legal services complement are women
- > Our percentage of female Equity Partners has increased to 41% from 31% since 2015 – a 32% increase
- > Our overall percentage of female partners (in both Equity Partner and Salaried Partner ranks) has increased to 43% from 35% since 2015 – a 23% increase
- > 55% of our newly promoted partners, and Head of Department lateral hires for FY20 and FY21, were women, and 55% were female EE candidates
- > Webber Wentzel was the first major South African law firm to appoint a woman to a senior leadership position in 2015
- > More than 40% of our senior leadership team (comprising our Board and Executive Committee) are women
- > 47% of pitches to key clients in the last year were led by women
- > Our biggest and highest revenue generating Business Unit (Corporate), which has the most ranked lawyers, has been led by a woman for the last 7 years
- > 31% of all women ranked in Chambers Global from all law firms operating in South Africa come from Webber Wentzel
- > Our Remcom is led by two female partners
- > 50% of our supplier development and enterprise development spend is on developing black-owned female businesses
- > We have assisted on many pro bono matters where females have been beneficiaries. In FY20-21 Webber Wentzel spent 21,056 hours on pro bono related matters, valued at approximately ZAR 63.1 million

LEADING FULL-SERVICE LAW FIRM ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT



SOUTH AFRICAN
LAW FIRM
OF THE
YEAR

Chambers Global



AFRICAN
LAW FIRM
OF THE
YEAR

African Legal
Awards



AFRICAN
TAX FIRM
OF THE
YEAR

International Tax Review
European, Tax Awards



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