

Deal Makers[®]

WOMEN 2025



Women of SA's M&A and Financial Markets Industry

FOREWORD



Marylou Greig
Editor

Each year on Women's Day, we pause to honour the courage, strength and resilience of women, both past and present, who have broken barriers and paved the way for future generations. In South Africa, this day holds deep historical significance, rooted in the 1956 march of 20,000 women to the Union Buildings in protest against unjust laws. It serves as both a tribute and a call to action; a reminder of how far we've come, and how much further we must go.

Within the South African M&A and financial markets industry, women continue to make strides, often quietly, often against the odds. This sector, long dominated by men, is slowly but surely beginning to recognise the immense value women bring to the table: not only through skill and insight, but through leadership, empathy, resilience and collaboration.

This collection of profiles and personal reflections is a celebration of those women. Each voice is unique, and each journey distinct, but common threads emerge; work hard, believe in yourself, and embrace the guidance and support of others. These stories are rich with lessons: from overcoming doubt to navigating complex deals, from building credibility to mentoring others in the quest to advance the visibility and influence of women in this industry.

It is our hope that these pages serve as more than just a showcase; that they be a source

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of inspiration to young women considering careers in finance, law or dealmaking. We hope that they offer encouragement to those who are navigating their own path, and serve as a reminder that they are not alone. Others have walked this road and thrived.

Let this be both a recognition of remarkable women and a beacon for the next generation.

This fifth edition of the feature will be released at the third DealMakers Women's Day networking event, which builds on the previous two years' success and will once again include a panel discussion. This year's panel members are Jo Mitchell-Marias, a Partner in Restructuring, Turnaround & Performance Improvement at Deloitte Africa; Amalia Lui, a Partner at Clyde & Co Tanzania; Shireen Motara, Founder and CEO of The Next Chapter Studio; Soria Hay, Founder and Head of Corporate Finance at Bravura; and Titi Sekhukhune, co-Founder and Partner at Infinite Partners.

My grateful thanks go to this dynamic industry for the continued support and participation in this feature and the networking event. And to my own team, who themselves are women juggling many roles, for their dedication and excellence in compiling this discourse – a collaboration and testament to the talented and resilient women in this space. 🙌

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The feature is available for download - www.dealmakerssouthafrica.com

Editor: Marylou Greig
Assistant Editor: Lee Robinson
Research: Vanessa Aitken
Marketing: Samantha Walmsley
Design & Layout: Suzie Assenmacher



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Tel: +27 (0) 11 886 6446
e-mail: reception@gleason.co.za
www.dealmakerssouthafrica.com

VIDEOS

CDH South Africa
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Q&A

Shireen Motara

Founder | CEO

The Next Chapter Studio

Tell us about your business.

The Next Chapter Studio is a Langebaan-based holding company, managing a portfolio of women-led lifestyle and empowerment brands. These include:

- Tilevera (home décor),
- Hey Casey! (fashion tech accessories),
- Sox and Jox (custom gifting),
- Silly George (personalised pillows),
- The Co-Op (a co-working hub), and
- The Next Chapter – a platform that empowers women through coaching, events, wellbeing resources, leadership development, and networking.

The business focuses on creating accessible, creative solutions that promote economic independence and entrepreneurial access for women and families across South Africa.

What motivated you to start your own business?

I wanted to create spaces and brands that reflect the realities, dreams and power of African women. With my background in coaching and strategy, I knew I could contribute to reshaping leadership narratives. As an entrepreneur, I'm passionate about building products and platforms that enable women, especially everyday South Africans, to earn flexibly, express themselves creatively, and contribute to something with purpose. I'm deeply self-motivated, purpose-driven and, as a single parent, I also needed the flexibility to align work with my life.

What steps did you take to get started?

I drew on more than 20 years of experience in leadership, law and development work, and combined that with community engagement, e-commerce strategy and product testing. I formalised my coaching practice, piloted brand offerings and scaled with intention, supported by strong systems and teams. Every brand I've built is grounded in values of accessibility, flexibility, and innovation rooted in community. I'm endlessly curious and a lifelong learner, which helps me continuously evolve and adapt.

What is your educational background?

- Master of Law (LLM), UNISA
- BProc. LLB, University of the Western Cape
- Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration, GIBS (University of Pretoria)
- Postgraduate Certificate in Coaching, University of Stellenbosch Executive Development
- Higher Certificate in Human Resource Management, Damelin Management School
- Certificate in Deep Coaching & the Enneagram, Deep Coaching Institute

Additional training includes:

- 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (Franklin Covey)

- Gestalt Organisational Development (Baobab Consulting)
- B-Tech Project Management (Xpert, EdExcel UK)
- People Management and Empowerment (Regenesys)

What habits or traits help set you up for success?

I'm naturally hardworking, curious, and not afraid of taking risks. If I don't know something, I'll make the effort to learn it. I also embrace failure as an opportunity for growth. That said, I'm a self-confessed "recovering perfectionist" and tend to overwork, so I've had to become more mindful of my own wellbeing. As a certified coach, I'm very aware of the patterns that hold women back, and I actively work on managing those in myself too.

What drives and inspires you?

Purpose is my biggest driver; particularly, the desire to empower African women through meaningful work. I'm inspired by midlife women entrepreneurs who champion wellbeing over hustle culture, such as Rachel Cook and Natalie Eckdahl. Their work reminds me that business can be both impactful and sustainable.

What does a typical day look like for you?

My day usually starts with taking chronic medication, followed by some quiet time – either reading or meditating. I love coffee, so that's a non-negotiable, sometimes even while on the treadmill! I then shower and either head to my office or work from home. I've started using the daily planner I designed for our business, alongside a running task list on my phone.

My workday is a mix of special projects, team and client communication, content development, and coaching; both online and in person. I try to wrap up work by 5 pm and, if I can, I cook. Evenings are for reading, knitting or streaming. My daughter is at boarding school, but I'm still very involved and constantly supporting her from afar.

Which entrepreneur do you admire and why?

I admire women entrepreneurs in midlife who understand that constant hustle is not sustainable. Women at this stage in life need different types of support. Rachel Cook of The CEO Collective and Natalie Eckdahl have both influenced my approach to leadership and business, and I've had the privilege of working with Natalie as my business coach.

What led you into this line of work?

Consulting was a natural extension of my skills and passion for empowering women. Coaching came from a place of personal transformation, as I'd experienced the impact of it firsthand. I entered e-commerce because I wanted a scalable business that didn't require me to be at a laptop all day. At this stage in my life, I'm focused on doing work that inspires and energises me. 

