

Q & A



Marita van der Walt

Director
DLA Piper

What initially drew you to a career in M&A or corporate finance?

I found it a very interesting, challenging and stimulating environment. The fact that every transaction presents its own unique challenges, and sometimes requires bespoke solutions, is what attracted me to M&A as a young lawyer.

Was there a pivotal moment or influence early in your life that shaped your interest in M&A?

I was given fantastic opportunities to be involved in high profile matters at a very young age. Being involved in very interesting and stimulating transactions early on was probably the reason why I ended up in M&A.

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

I discovered M&A only after venturing into various other fields like banking and finance, regulatory law and structured finance, to name a few. During the early 2000s, the M&A landscape was very exciting, with lots of opportunities for young lawyers, and I was just privileged to be there in the right place and at the right time.

Can you share a defining moment or turning point in your career so far?

After I completed my articles, I was actually considering a career outside of law when I was assigned to a very talented senior lawyer. We worked together for a couple of years, and I learnt more from him than I could ever have asked for. This exposure opened doors for me and, looking back, this was definitely a turning point.

Have you faced any gender-based challenges or biases in your career? If so, how did you navigate them?

Even though I grew up as a lawyer in a very traditional Afrikaans law firm dominated by senior men, I always felt respected and an equal part of the team. Biases are, however, a real part of life – and probably always will be – but sometimes it is an advantage to be underestimated.

The bigger gender-based challenge, for me personally, arises from my preference to be the primary caretaker of my children. To this day, I have not been able to figure out how to balance work and kids while being good at both. 🙏



Callie-Jo Bouman – Senior Associate

Most memorable M&A transaction you worked on?

Advising Sanlam Life and Sanlam Personal Loans on the establishment of a retail credit joint venture with TymeBank was a standout transaction in my career. This transaction is memorable for its legal intricacies, our dynamic and solutions-driven approach, and the opportunity it presented to work with innovative clients.



Zama Shoba - Senior Associate

Most memorable M&A transaction you worked on?

The Barloworld take private transaction by a consortium of investors valued at c.R23 billion (which is public and ongoing). This transaction has been a highlight in my career as I was tasked with responsibilities which raised thought provoking questions, kept me on my toes, overall sharpened my knowledge on public M&A and built strong relationships with the stakeholders involved.



Sibusile Khushi - Senior Associate

Most memorable M&A transaction you worked on?

Although our client was not the preferred bidder, we acted for an international consortium that sought to bid to purchase an oil and gas business in South Africa. It was a complex and time pressured transaction in putting together an offer that our client knew was thoroughly considered.



Annie Nair - Senior Associate

Most memorable M&A transaction you worked on?

Advising ECP Africa Fund IV on its acquisition of majority stakes in Burger King South Africa and Grand Foods Meat Plant from Grand Parade Investments, it was my first major transaction as a newly retained associate. It was fast paced, and I got my first taste of how thrilling transactional work can be when everyone is working to get to signing and then closing.