

# PROFILE

Lydia Shadrach-Razzino

Corporate Commercial | Executive - ENSafrica

lshadrachrazzino@ENSafrica.com  
M: +27 82 411 9346



**L** Lydia Shadrach-Razzino, an executive in ENSafrica's corporate commercial department, leads one of the largest corporate teams in the firm. Lydia is a specialist in both M&A (public and private) and Private Equity.

She advises on the full suite of the transaction process, including takeovers and defence strategies, structuring, shareholder arrangements (both for controlling and minority shareholders and consortiums), fundamental transactions, categorised and related party transactions and take private transactions. Lydia also has extensive equity capital markets experience as well as general corporate finance experience.

In 2020, Lydia was shortlisted by DealMakers for the DealMaker of the Year Award, putting her as the first female lawyer to be shortlisted for this award and the second female shortlist nominee in the history of the DealMaker awards. In 2014 Lydia was awarded the Corporate Finance Lawyer of the Year Award by ABSIP (the Association of Black Securities and Investment Professionals) and she was also recognised as one of two finalists in 2015 for the same awards.

Lydia's extensive client list spans many sectors from retail, to logistics, finance and telecoms, including clients such as; The Foschini Group, Ascendis, Helios Towers, Vodacom, Hollard, Massmart, Oppenheimer Partners, PPC, ARC, RMB Ventures, RMB Corvest, Kleoss Capital, Business Connexion, Telkom, Capitalworks and The Multiply Group, as well as advising a number of Development Finance Institutions including the IFC, CDC, the IFU and Norfund. Lydia's work is not limited to local transactions, but rather expands beyond South Africa, having advised on a number of cross border transactions, a number of which do not have a South African component to the deal and are focussed in other African jurisdictions

(including multi-jurisdictional transactions). Lydia and her team coordinate these transactions from the Johannesburg office of the firm .

Lydia has advised on a significant number of complex and high value transactions over the years and, in each year, at least one of the transactions she leads is shortlisted in the Deal of the Year category and/or Private Equity Deal of the Year by DealMakers,. Notably she advised (i) RMB Ventures on its acquisition of the Bluff Meat Supply Group, which was awarded Catalyst Private Equity Deal of the Year 2013 at the DealMakers Gala Awards, (ii) Capitalworks on the disposal of the Much Asphalt business which was awarded Catalyst Private Equity Deal of the Year 2018 at the DealMakers Gala Awards and (iii) Vodacom on its acquisition of an interest in Safaricom (deal value R35bn), which was awarded Deal of the Year in 2018.

Lydia leads a diverse and empowered team of successful lawyers and is able to staff a transaction with a team of diverse, experienced lawyers, with her team being largely constituted of people of colour and females. Mentoring female lawyers is a fundamental part of Lydia's practice. Lydia's skills, expertise and approach to practice has earned her a place amongst the most respected corporate lawyers in South Africa.

**Q** What's your advice to young women looking to get into the M&A field?

**A** I am often asked what my advice to up and coming female lawyers would be and it's actually a difficult question to answer without writing a book on it (now there's an idea).

In answering the question, I take myself back to the early 2000s when I started practicing law and I recall feeling like I did not belong in the big corporate world dominated by men. I also felt quite lost while working on a transaction and that

feeling emanated directly from having no one to answer the myriad of questions I had, or to help me decipher the jargon thrown around in boardrooms amongst more seasoned deal transactors. I felt too small, insignificant and not brave enough to ask questions.

My first mistake was believing that I did not belong there and therefore had no right to ask the burning questions so my first piece of advice to young up and coming female lawyers is to believe that you have as much a right to be part of this world as anyone else and ask as many questions as you feel necessary for yourself in order to understand a concept or principle (legal or not).

One of the greatest pieces of advice I myself received as a young lawyer came from one of my mentors, Ludwig Smith. He said (during one of our many training sessions for which I am eternally grateful) that lawyers over complicate things and one must draft so simply that anyone picking up your document can understand what you are trying say. He also said that if you can't explain a concept in simple terms that means you don't understand it yourself.

This brings me to my next piece advice; always make sure you understand concepts, principles and ideas so well that if you are asked to explain it you can do so in simple uncomplicated terms. The key to this actually comes from your own understanding. Other aspects of my own learnings which I hope will be helpful are:

- > be authentic and sincere – inauthenticity and insincerity shines brightly and is always noticed;
- > keep your head down, work hard, understand where you want to be and what motivates you. Don't be distracted by the noise, focus on real issues; and
- > have fun and enjoy the journey, it is an immensely rewarding career.


**Her clients have had the following to say about her capabilities –**

- > *“Her commercial and pragmatic approach to various scenarios and her ability to find solutions to most issues, assisted the deal team in successfully concluding a very complex transaction”*
- > *“Lydia spearheaded the complex legal structuring and due diligence that was required in several jurisdictions across Southern Africa and the multi-national nature of the investors required further careful legal input and structuring which she provided”*
- > *“Lydia played an invaluable and all-encompassing role for the buying consortium in the transaction”*

**LYDIA IS RECOGNISED AS A LEADING/RECOMMENDED LAWYER BY:**

- Chambers Global Guide 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018 – Corporate/M&A; Private Equity; 2019, 2017, 2016 – Corporate/M&A (South Africa)
- Best Lawyers® 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016 – Corporate (South Africa)
- The Legal 500 2021, 2019, 2018 – Commercial, Corporate and M&A - Recommended / Key Lawyer (South Africa)

**QUALIFICATIONS**

- BProc (University of KwaZulu-Natal)
- LLB (University of KwaZulu-Natal)
- Admitted as an attorney of the High Court of South Africa 



*their footprint in Africa is unparalleled*

Chambers Global Guide

scan QR code  
discover more

