



BOWMANS

Robyn Berger

Executive

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

A When I left school, I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. My mom said ‘study a B.Com and you can decide from there’, so I did. After completing my degree, I joined one of South Africa’s boutique banks working in various divisions and roles. While there, I enrolled to study a Higher Diploma in Taxation at the University of Johannesburg, which led me to join Arthur Andersen (which subsequently merged with KPMG) and, as they say, the rest is history. I now have two Higher Diplomas in Tax and a 23-year career in the field. I left KPMG just over four years ago, after 19 years in the accounting profession, to explore life within a law firm. I continue to experience a rich, rewarding career in tax at Bowmans.

Q *What advice would you give to other women thinking of entering the M&A industry?*

A I personally have never felt that being a woman places me at a disadvantage. If anything, I think my female attributes, most especially my intuition and ability to see the bigger picture, have helped me to succeed. Over the years I have learnt many important lessons that may be valuable for other women building their careers including:

Avoid becoming so obsessed with your career that you lose focus on the important things, like picking the right life partner, having a family (if that is your aim), and making time for your hobbies or other interests. I, like many women, have struggled over the years with the concept of ‘work life balance’ and ‘working mom guilt’. My belief is that, as women, we can restart our careers at any time in our lives, but we cannot restart our biological clocks. I am a firm believer that women should prioritise having a family young; the corporate world will still be there when you are ready to refocus your attention.

Take responsibility for your financial independence. People often speak about the need to empower women, but the practicalities of how remain a mystery. I have learnt first-hand (growing up in a single parent household) that education and workplace experience are critical components to achieving financial independence, which in turn leads to the empowerment of women. 

