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Principal: Energy Finance



Q *What led you to pursue a career in the financial markets or energy sector?*

A At the end of my schooling, popular career choices included Engineering, Medicine and Finance. Before I started with my university studies, I made a last-minute switch from Engineering to Business Science when I realised that I was better suited for this career path and enjoyed the appeal of a corporate environment and dealmaking.

A few years into my working life, I was given the opportunity to work as a transactor in the Energy Finance team at Nedbank. The shift in my career came at a time when the country was facing electricity supply issues and focus had shifted towards global carbon emission reductions. The first window of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP), where one of the key objectives is local procurement and empowerment, was just concluded. It is quite rewarding to work in a space that allows you and your organisation to make a positive contribution to the country. There is also something special about seeing the end result after all those months, or even years, of hard work towards something as magnificent as the renewable energy (e.g., wind or solar PV) power plant that we worked on.

Q *What was the toughest deal you ever worked on and why?*

A The toughest deal led to a turning point in my career. I was the junior transactor on the deal when the senior transactor was promoted and largely taken out of the loop.

This gave me the opportunity to step up and lead the deal to close. The transaction was a portfolio of renewable-energy projects in REIPPPP that faced many delays from the public side. There were also challenges facing the shareholders of the project, which contributed to the complexity of the transaction and were negatively impacting the closing. Due to these challenges and short timeframe to meet signature dates, the teams involved had to work long nights under immense pressure and a tight timeline to find solutions to new problems daily. Added to the complexity of leading my first transaction, I was also in the early weeks of my pregnancy when I was unable to disclose it, and was suffering from severe nausea. It was a challenging but very rewarding time.

Q *If you could change one thing on your career path, what would it be and why?*

A I have been in my current team for 10 years because I enjoy what I'm doing and being around the people that I work with. The energy industry in South Africa faces many challenges and is constantly changing, which fosters some diversity and keeps the day-to-day job interesting. If I could change just one thing though, it would be to add more diversity to my work history. I particularly would have liked to work abroad early on in my career, before starting a family.

Q *What piece of advice would you give a young woman working on her first transaction?*

A Pay careful attention to how you show up. Do not be afraid to express and

explore fresh new ideas, especially within the confines of your immediate team (where you should feel more comfortable), and lean on the senior team members for guidance. Identify individual/s that you are comfortable with to be your mentor/s. Ask questions and display your willingness to learn and eagerness to grow. In the early years of your career, enthusiasm, drive and passion are imperative.

Q *What do you do to unwind or get away from the stress of work?*

A I enjoy boxfit exercise classes, spa treatments, and weekend getaways with my family.

FUN FACTS

Current book on your nightstand:

Nightingale by Kristin Hannah.

Favourite restaurant: Mosaic at the Orient, which has sadly closed. The head chef, Chantel Dartnall, was one of the top female chefs in South Africa.

Dog or cat person: I love dogs, and I have two fur babies.

Preferred holiday destination: Locally, I enjoy going to game reserves and wine farms – Franschhoek is one of my favourite places in South Africa.

Internationally, I enjoy travelling to Europe because of the ease of exploring cities by foot and public transport, as well as good cuisine and the architecture. 🇪🇺