

THE RISING 20:

THE NEXT GENERATION OF DEALMAKERS

A DealMakers Pathfinder initiative.

Shortlisted Nominees

The launch of **The Rising 20 Awards** was a long time in the making and represents a natural evolution of the successful DealMakers Pathfinder series, which was created to provide a platform for young M&A professionals to build meaningful networks and develop their careers.

Nominees were assessed by an independent panel of four judges using a structured 100-point scorecard. As these candidates are not yet partners or primary deal leads, the assessment placed less emphasis on headline deal ownership and greater focus on their impact, technical excellence, career trajectory, leadership potential, and contribution to successful deals.

Our expert judging panel has spent the last few weeks reviewing an incredible pool of talent, and the wait is almost over. We are thrilled to release the **SHORTLISTED NOMINEES** for the inaugural **Rising 20** Awards.

This inaugural milestone recognises the top young professionals driving excellence, strategy, and transformation across the M&A, capital markets and corporate finance sectors.

On **27 October 2026**, the final **Rising 20** cohort will be announced live in Johannesburg.

Each of **The Rising 20** will be awarded with a framed certificate at the event. A digital feature will be available on the DealMakers website and LinkedIn social media account.

The feature will include:

- 1 page profile on each of the 20 individuals
- Independent panel commentary on the nomination and selection process
- Industry insights on the value of mentorship and other related content

At the ANSARADA DealMakers Annual Awards in February 2027, **The Rising 20** will be acknowledged as part of the programme on the night.



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Meet the Shortlisted Nominees:



Akhona Mdunge

Senior Associate
CDH

Anele Thusini

Senior Manager
Deloitte



Apelele Fundama

Senior Associate
Nedbank

Azola Futshane

Senior Associate
Bowmans



Basanda Maluleka

Senior Associate
Baker McKenzie

Callie-Jo Bouman

Senior Associate
DLA Piper



Charissa Beyers

Senior Associate
Bowmans

Daniela Perros

Corporate Finance Transactor
Rand Merchant Bank



Gaby Wesson

Senior Associate
CDH

Joshua Da Costa

Associate
CDH



Meet the Shortlisted Nominees:



Keagan Hyslop

Associate
CDH

Khanyisa Mohlaba

Senior Associate
Bowmans



Matthew Holding

Corporate Finance Transactor
Rand Merchant Bank

Nelson de Bastos

Associate Principal
Nedbank



Nicole Lancefield

Corporate Finance Transactor
Rand Merchant Bank

Nomathole Nhlapo

Associate
Baker McKenzie



Nonhlelo Nhleko

Senior Associate
Bowmans

Olivia Moz

Senior Manager
EY-Parthenon



Ryan Morrison

Senior Associate
Nedbank

Sfiso Gcwensa

Senior Associate
Nedbank



Meet the Shortlisted Nominees:



Sibusile Khusi

Senior Associate
DLA Piper

Simon Mateus

Associate
Baker McKenzie



Tajal Sooklal

Senior Manager
EY-Parthenon

Tarryn Witten

Corporate Finance Transactor
Rand Merchant Bank



Tawfeeq Bernard

Senior Associate
Bowmans

Thato Moloi

Corporate Finance Transactor
Rand Merchant Bank



Ukanyo Mabandla

Senior Associate
Bowmans

Viyola Van Zyl

Senior Associate
Bowmans



Yeshan Reddy

Corporate Finance Transactor
Rand Merchant Bank

