

Q&A

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Standard Bank

Q *What does your current role entail, and tell us about your journey to this position?*

A I'm currently double hatting as the Head of Investment Banking for the Western Cape, and an executive in the Sustainable Finance team.

I'm a chartered accountant by profession and have been in Investment Banking for 14 years now, with most of my career spent in the debt space – both leverage finance and corporate debt.

I took on a broader investment banking role in 2019 and in 2020 alongside this, I immersed myself in the exciting and fast-developing world of sustainable finance.

Q *Did you have a mentor at any point in your career? If so, what did you learn from them?*

A I haven't had a formal mentor per se but have had a handful of informal mentors throughout my career. They have been a valuable sounding board at times when your career or life hits a fork in the road, and you may need to make some tough decisions. They have provided useful perspective at key turning points in my career.

Q *What is the biggest / most complex transaction you have worked on so far in your career?*

A It's very hard to pinpoint one single deal, but I can think of two to three that immediately come to mind. One was a complex financing structure for a BEE transaction, involving preference share financing and collar financing tranches. Another was acquisition financing for an offshore transaction, involving bridge funding and various take-out tranches

including an equity raise. Another one was a small growth capex funding facility for a sector that the bank had traditionally not had appetite to lend to. All complex in their own way and for different reasons, not only the big deals come with complexity!

Q *What hurdles (if any), have you had to overcome in an industry that has traditionally been male-dominated?*

A I would probably say the same hurdles everyone in the industry has faced. Investment banking is a challenging environment that demands a great deal from you on a daily basis. The demands are high, the hours are long but the work is stimulating and the people you work with are energised, talented and passionate.

The illusion of work-life-balance I don't think is something static. I would more accurately describe every day as a juggle, some days your work demands more of you, other days your kids, family or health demands more of your time and focus. At the end of the day, you have a finite pot of energy and number of hours in a day, that needs to be split amongst the various priorities in your life, in a way that leaves you feeling fulfilled and happy.

Q *What are three words you would use to describe yourself?*

A Passionate, resilient and authentic.

Q *What are three words your colleagues would use to describe you? Would you agree with them?*

A I asked a few people for input on this one. Committed, passionate, human and results-orientated came up. Yes, I would probably agree with them. I'm glad the human aspect came out!

Q *What qualities would you say are essential for a woman to thrive in the investment banking industry?*

A You need resilience, passion, confidence and authenticity. It is important to have some personal outlets too, whether this is exercise, meditation, painting etc. Something that can counter-balance the day-to-day demands that work places on you. You also need an appropriate support system, both within the organisation (this may be a mentor or similar) and within your personal life.

Q *What would you say to another woman who was thinking of changing fields because the industry is so male-dominated?*

A I view being a woman in investment banking as a strength. You're able to bring a different perspective to a situation, discussion or team environment, and that diversity is valuable. Think of yourself as a role model for your kids or other young females considering their career paths.

Do not put pressure on yourself to experience a linear upward trajectory in your career as from time to time, you may need to plateau or even take a step backwards, in order to maintain balance in your life.

Lastly, and importantly, feel confident in asking for the support you may need from time to time - you'll be surprised at how much support there is if you are willing to ask for it.