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## WHITE & CASE

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

**A** My legal career started in 2012, when I began my articles in the corporate commercial department of ENS. Corporate commercial was actually my second choice – I originally had my heart set on becoming a competition lawyer. I was disappointed initially, but I quickly realised that corporate commercial was a great fit for me as it combined everything that I enjoyed.

In 2015, I was heavily involved in one of our team's first PE deals and after that, a few more started to come in - I was involved in all of those early deals. As we gained more experience in the space, our reputation grew, and our PE focus snowballed from there.

Our team later moved across from ENS to White & Case, which has a specific focus on a number of areas, including PE. This move gave us access to W&C's broader PE network and experience and we worked very closely with the London PE office.

Today, I specialise in private equity, having developed my expertise and experience and built my reputation in that area over the past few years.

**Q** *How has Covid affected your work in PE?*

**A** The PE market definitely went quieter during the pandemic. Understandably, people are less willing to make acquisitions and investments during periods of uncertainty. A lot of M&A lawyers went through a quiet spell over the last year, but my team remained very busy – despite working from home during a lockdown. Our focus did shift to other areas (such as mining) while the PE market was quiet.

We have however recently seen more activity in the PE and M&A markets.

**Q** *What aspect of your job do you enjoy most?*

**A** I don't enjoy research! What I really enjoy is drafting agreements, the negotiations – anything transactional. I also enjoy problem solving for clients – it requires you to think creatively and laterally.

**Q** *What traits would you encourage those entering the legal profession to develop?*

**A** Traits which are really important for M&A lawyers in particular are attention to detail as well as understanding the bigger commercial picture from the client's perspective. Excellent attention to detail is critical, because when working on large transactions with many moving parts as well as lengthy, complex legal agreements, it's easy for something to slip through the cracks. It is however also important to have a bigger picture understanding of what the client is trying to achieve from a commercial perspective.

And, of course, a sound work ethic is crucial – you have to be dedicated and do what it takes to get the work done. As an example, when I was a senior associate, we were working on a deal that was due to close the next morning. I'd been working on the transaction agreements and left the office at about 9pm but stayed in touch with the team who were finishing up through the night. At about 2am, I found out that some of the resolutions hadn't scanned properly. I ended up rushing over to the office, picking up the documents and driving them over to Webber Wentzel where I met an associate in the basement so I could hand them over – all while still

in my pyjamas. In this field, it doesn't matter how senior you get if things need to be done you need to be prepared to roll up your sleeves and get them done.

**Q** *What is the most challenging aspect of your job?*

**A** The hours are very demanding, so I would say that balancing work and my other responsibilities is the most challenging aspect of my job.

I've also just come back from maternity leave, which has been an adjustment in terms of learning how to balance my new responsibilities with my work responsibilities. I'm still figuring this out and am learning through trial and error. One thing which has worked well is that I have generally blocked out between 4pm and 6pm from my diary so that I can spend this time with my baby and my husband - I then make this time up either earlier in the morning or later in the evening.

Covid has also obviously been a challenge. While I have enjoyed working from home, I miss the practical support and camaraderie that you get in the office. But having said that, it has been great that I can use the time that I would otherwise have spent commuting doing productive work

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

**A** PE and law were traditionally both male-dominated spaces, but now there is more female representation at the higher levels. I've been relatively lucky in the teams and environments I've found myself in as the focus has been purely on performance. As a result, to some extent, I may have been shielded from what many other women in these industries may have experienced. 🙌