

Q&A

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Principal - Bravura



Q What drives you?

A What drives me has evolved over time. At first it was my determination and will to succeed, followed by my aspiration to be a positive and strong role model to my daughters. Now I find myself driven by a strong sense of purpose, especially when it adds to my desire to contribute value and shape culture.

Q What attracted you to the investment banking industry?

A Investment banking is an exciting and dynamic environment which provides exposure to multiple industries, in the listed and private space, both locally and internationally. I have the opportunity and enjoy the challenge of working on innovative and landmark deals that contribute to the growth of our economy.

I also get to cross paths with some of the most brilliant people – and yes, iron sharpens iron!

Q Team player or lone maverick? Why?

A Definitely a team player - none of us is as smart as all of us! The importance of teamwork is essential in today's multidisciplinary world. In every aspect of a business, the diverse skills of teams are needed for attaining success.

Q In a sentence, describe your particular "brand" of success.

A A trusted advisor who designs bespoke solutions for client success.

Q How might others describe you?

A This depends on the beholder: my family would say that I am ambitious, self-sacrificing and passionate about transformation; and, oh yes, I often get called the "task master"! (If you are reading this, it is not an admission.)

Actually, a great mentor who has played an important part in my career development,

shared his observations as follows: "Evon has the tenacity and perseverance to succeed at anything. Her organisation and planning ability is rare and a great strength." As I hold him in high esteem, I find this to be a wonderful compliment.

Q Could you briefly share your career path, which brought you to your current position?

A Obtaining my Bachelor of Accountancy degree was one of the biggest achievements for me as I had to overcome many personal challenges to get to that point. I worked five jobs to pay my way through University and when PwC offered me articles before completing my honours degree, I was overjoyed as it helped relieve the financial pressure.

I began my articles at PwC in the consumer and industrial product audit business division. I learnt very quickly that auditing was definitely something I was not passionate about. On completing my articles and qualifying as a CA (SA), I transferred to PwC's merger and acquisition team to navigate closer towards my investment banking aspirations. I later joined Grindrod Bank Corporate Finance which was invaluable in creating a foundation for my career in investment banking.

As women, we have much tougher choices and sacrifices to make. I put my career on ice for five years to take care of my kids, but I believe that I was very fortunate and blessed to have had this opportunity.

In 2016, I decided to return to the corporate world, and with a solid support structure and the support of my family, I joined KPMG Deal Advisory in Johannesburg, as a senior manager. My family and I live in KZN, so this meant a weekly commute to Gauteng and back. I would like to think of it as having the best of both worlds.

I was very determined to fast-track my career and get the necessary transaction exposure, and KPMG provided a solid

platform for this. In 2018, KPMG lost market share due to negative media coverage, and sadly I decided to move on.

I joined Bravura in 2018. This has been an amazing journey. I have worked on some of the most impactful deals and have personally and professionally grown as a person.

Q Do you think that succeeding in investment banking is more challenging for women? If so, why?

A Absolutely! Despite slight positive movements in the gender gap, I would say that, broadly, men continue dominating this space and are more likely to be given leadership roles.

Q Was there any time in your career that you perhaps felt like giving up? How did you come through that?

A I am a mother of three children, all of whom are at school. This, along with the disruption of Covid and working from home with a day full of online meetings, is immensely challenging. However, a career in investment banking gives one a strong work ethic, stamina and discipline from years of persistent hard work. I am thankful that I can apply that same work ethic, even when the going gets tough.

Q If you had the opportunity to do something again, in your career, what would that be and what would you have done differently?

A I wouldn't change anything. My journey has made me appreciate and value the place I am right now.

Q What would you tell young women hoping to succeed in your field?

A Don't accept anyone telling you it cannot be done. Step into your courage, but stay true to yourself. Having a career in investment banking doesn't mean that you have to give up on being a mother, a wife, daughter or friend. It is doable. 🙌