

Amber Kardamilakis

Director



NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT

Q *What led you to pursue a career in M&A | the Financial Markets?*

A Early in my career, I became involved in M&A as I had no area of speciality in mind, and I believed that an understanding of M&A is fundamental to the implementation of other areas of law. So I figured that I would work in M&A to develop a base understanding of the area, and then discover a more specific career direction from there. So I started in M&A and have not looked back. What kept me in the M&A space is my love of the creativity and complexities that many other areas of law do not have. For me, working in the M&A space is not unlike a kid playing with blocks. There are basic principles that need to be complied with but, other than that, lawyers are free to build and design their own transactions based on the needs of the parties and the unique features of a transaction. The success and longevity of transactions are heavily influenced by the lawyers involved. This became even more evident when I specialised in broad-based black economic empowerment (BEE). BEE in the M&A space has also allowed me the opportunity to be involved in and facilitate real, transformative change through our clients' transactions and various initiatives. Seeing the positive impact that can be created by BEE in the M&A space has also kept me dedicated to my work, motivated in my career, and driven to continue making an impact where I can.

Q *What is your favourite sector to do a deal in and why?*

A BEE transactions occur within every sector of the economy. However, personally, my favourite sectors to deal in are those that relate to the mining sector. The mining sector is always interesting from a

legislative perspective, but what makes it my favourite is the people. Our clients within the mining (and related) sector are often direct, no-fuss people with great senses of humour. These clients make even the most difficult transactions enjoyable.

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

A There is much in my career that has not gone according to plan, but most of it has led me to the very fortunate position that I am in today. If there was one thing that I would change, it would be for me to have better leveraged the formal and informal mentorship programmes that were available throughout my career. Being more involved in the programmes now, in both the mentee and mentorship capacities, I see the value that these relationships can bring to those that participate. I have no doubt that it may have saved me a few bumps along the road, but I also believe that my career, and my development as a lawyer, would also have benefited from being involved.

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

A First, and most importantly, get to a point of having your first transaction. Do not pre-emptively step back from your career. I have seen young women consider not starting their articles or practicing law based on potential future events such as emigrating, getting married or having children. This is despite their intention to only do so in the medium to long term future. These young women had already stepped back from a career they desired and had studied for, despite having

little to no experience in the legal space, nor knowing where their careers may ultimately take them.

Second, and flowing from the first piece of advice, step forward. Put your hand up to help on different work streams, do the hard work and put in the hours – especially when you are in the early stages of your career. Take advantage of the opportunities that come your way, and create opportunities where you can. No one can ever take away the knowledge and experience that you gain through your work. Take ownership of your career and do everything you can to develop yourself into the best lawyer you can be.

Q *What do you do to celebrate the closing of a big deal?*

A The amount of time and effort required to close a big deal usually demands a lot from the deal team – including long hours away from their loved ones. A big lunch or dinner together with the team is a great way to thank them for their dedication and celebrate the closing. However, for me, the best way to celebrate is coming home to hugs from my baby daughter, and a whisky with my husband.

FUN FACTS

Favourite Colour: Deep purple.

Current book on your nightstand: *The Book of Two Ways* by Jodi Picoult.

Dog or cat person: Cat person, easily.

Item ticked off your bucket list: Bierfest in Munich, Germany.

Preferred holiday destination: Bali, Indonesia. 📍