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

A Early on in my career, I realised that M&A would be an area of practice in which I would want to grow, as it is interesting and continuously stimulating.

Each transaction presents unique issues which need to be catered for and resolved across multiple areas of law. There are also often sector or transaction specific considerations which add nuance and lead to innovative thinking and creativity in transaction structuring. The collaboration and teamwork required to complete an M&A transaction is energising, and seeing the outcome of a successfully completed M&A transaction is always rewarding.

### Q *What, in your opinion, is the hardest part of an M&A deal | financial market transaction?*

A Considering that there are multiple components of any M&A deal which are typically complex and need to be run in parallel, typically, the hardest part of an M&A deal is managing all workstreams, as well as the large teams that are running these workstreams, to achieve completion of a deal within (in many instances) accelerated timelines. Successfully managing people throughout the process is also a large part of what is required and, to do so, a good understanding of team dynamics is imperative. There are also certain sectors which present distinct and complex regulatory issues that need to be catered for in a transaction and, many times, resolving these issues outweighs any other complexities.

### Q *The M&A industry worldwide has been a rollercoaster for the last few years – where do YOU think M&A in South Africa is headed, given our current political, economic and social climate?*

A M&A activity is picking up in the second half of 2023 (when compared with the same period in 2022), albeit at a slower pace than we had hoped it would. We foresee parties continuing to be cautious in their transaction dealings as investor confidence remains low and general sentiment is affected by a number of global and local economic and political factors. However, parties are unlikely to put a pause on M&A transactions where they are able to align on the valuation and/or where an acquisition or disposal makes strategic sense, as there is mounting pressure to stimulate economic growth in many sectors.

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

A Although there is nothing that I would really change, what I would do differently in the early days of my career is to be more intentional about gaining experience in the areas of practice I have an interest in. It is easier to shape one's career with a bit more experience, but doing so in the early days can be challenging and requires the right support and mentorship.

My advice to younger women is to (i) spend time discovering your strengths and understanding where you can add value in the profession, and (ii) find a mentor whose values and career goals are aligned with yours, and ensure that you are always intentional about the direction of their career path.

### Q *What skills are important for an M&A advisor to have?*

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- Technical knowledge on the transaction structure and sector in which you are working.
  - People management skills.
  - Laser focus.
  - Organisational skills and the ability to simultaneously manage multiple workstreams
  - The ability to adapt to changing circumstances and be solution oriented.

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

A There are usually many workstreams to work on in a transaction, so the essential points are to stay focused and be organised.

Immerse yourself in the detail of the transaction, and ensure that you have a full understanding of what you are advising on. Do your homework on legal concepts and transaction structures when faced with a new type of transaction that you have perhaps not worked on before. Be curious, and if there are any aspects which are unclear, ask questions early on. Seek out advice and guidance from other more experienced attorneys, keep notes and be pro-active at all times in the role you play in any transaction.

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

A When there is time, it usually involves a morning at the spa and/or retail therapy! 🛁