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Deloitte.

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

A I was always detail-orientated and enjoyed understanding how markets worked, even in high school. I remember typing up projects for my older siblings who were studying commerce, and found the content fascinating. I even used to watch the Business Update religiously at 22h00 in the evenings, with my sister who was studying her Masters in Economics at the time (needless to say, I needed her to explain most of it to me).

During my articles, I had to review certain valuations, which piqued my interest in Corporate Finance (as I was definitely not destined for audit). I have been privileged to work across the transaction life cycle and to learn how it all works together, as well as considering how these deals actually impact the market beyond the company specific implications. This has kept me in corporate finance for more than 15 years.

Q What was the toughest deal | listing | issue etc you ever worked on and why?

A All transactions come with their own complexities, but the one that is a career highlight is the strategic review of a financial services operation to determine whether they were going to discontinue, mothball or keep their doors open. This required out-of-the-box thinking, as one needed to consider the strategic, financial and operational viability in a key region, which impacts an entire workforce, as well as key international stakeholders. It also highlighted the importance of considering the cultural norms which we often take for granted – it is never a one size fits all.

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 will always be a key market activity, as companies navigate their own journeys in a challenging environment. I expect delistings and shareholder reorganisations to continue as companies attempt to unlock value and refocus on their strategic ambitions. With fewer regulatory requirements than a listed environment, the C-suite has more capacity to focus on their core business activities.

From a private, family business perspective, we expect to see more activity as the succession planning plays out, and the older generation need to handover the reins. This too results in more activity, as there is not always consensus as to the longer term views and management of family businesses.

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

A Your first transaction can be daunting, and that's OK – we've all been there. Ask questions, persevere and be curious. Until you ask, you will not realise how willing others are to help and support you. I found that having mentors, both within your organisation and in the industry, can be helpful in navigating your career and getting different perspectives.

Your growth will only come from seizing opportunities which make you uncomfortable and get you out of your comfort zone. If it's not scary, then don't do it. These challenges make us who we are and prepare you for leadership.

And always remember to be empathetic when you see the younger version of yourself in a few years. It will make you appreciate your own journey and be proud of yourself.

Q What do you do to unwind | get away from the stress of work?

A Our careers take up a significant portion of our time, so it's essential to have the

downtime to rebalance yourself. Unwinding for me is about spending time with my family and having the quality time to decompress. Setting aside time to give back to those who have supported me during weekends of deadlines and 16-hour days is so important, as we need to demonstrate how valuable these relationships are. I have also learnt that planning family getaways every few months gives your family unit something to look forward to, and provides the chance for your kids to start making their wish-lists for that trip.

Overall, it is essential to be present in the moment. When you are taking the downtime, be present: do not check work emails on your device. Make sure that you've planned ahead, and trust your team to support you during your break. Leave the laptop at home.

FUN FACTS

Favourite restaurant: Ariel in Sea Point for a pasta on a cold Friday night in Cape Town, and Mariner's Wharf in Hout Bay – a childhood favourite for a Sunday afternoon.

Dog or cat person: Definitely cat – Hugo and Luna are the real bosses at home.

Unusual hobbies: During lockdown, I started gardening, which turned into a passion when we started seeing results. I wouldn't say that I am quite ready to abandon city life and start a farm, but it has become a satisfying stress-reliever.

Preferred holiday destination: Our holidays are normally a mix of city and beach time. We much prefer the warmer weather, and tend to fly north during the June holidays to Europe or the Middle East.

Three words that your colleagues would use to describe you: Authentic, hardworking and passionate. 🇿🇦