



## Isabel Amoils

COO: Commercial Property Finance,  
Absa Corporate and Investment Banking.



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

A I qualified as a CA(SA) and started my career in banking shortly thereafter. I was very fortunate to get great exposure from a young age, as a role in investor relations provided me with insight into the different businesses and aspects impacting banking from early on. I then spent a few years in finance (it does all come down to the numbers!), before moving into a business management role in the Investment Bank, and ultimately the COO role in Commercial Property Finance.

### Q *Did you have a mentor at any point in your career? If so, who were they and what did you learn from them?*

A I have never had a formal mentor outside of line management, mostly because I have been privileged to work with many business leaders who played this role as a matter

of course. The biggest lesson I've learned through this interaction is the importance of enrolling a team and taking them along for the journey. This holds especially true in a complex organisation where alignment across areas needs to be created.

### Q *What are some of the most memorable projects you have worked on?*

A Replatforming a loans business has turned out to be no small task. Because of my role, I have been involved in many business restructures and change initiatives but unplugging from legacy systems and systematically moving to strategic architecture has proven very challenging given the number of moving parts and teams involved.

### Q *How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your work or career?*

A I don't think anyone came through the pandemic unchanged. Strangely, it brought mostly positive

change for me. From a work perspective, we pulled together as a team and rolled out a debt relief programme for property clients in timeframes we would never have believed possible before. The way Absa enabled and supported teams throughout the pandemic went a long way to shifting the culture and fostered a lot of goodwill with employees – including me. It also reinforced the importance of networks. It would have been very hard to get things done in crunch time if I didn't know how to navigate the organisation.

### Q *What advice would you give to young women who are looking to enter the corporate finance market?*

A Don't hold yourself back. The playing field is constantly changing, and it's much more accessible to women. Don't let ideas around prejudice become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

