



Deal Makers

WOMEN 2023

Women of SA's M&A and
Financial Markets Industry



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Marylou Greig
Editor

Women's Month in South Africa holds important significance as we continue to work together to empower women in all spheres of life. August is the time to reflect on the many achievements of the brave women of our past who fought against gender, race and class oppression, and to remember them as those who laid the foundation for the gender equitable society we work towards in South Africa.

Although the status of women in this country has improved in recent decades, gender inequalities persist, and the fact remains that women are still largely underrepresented in leadership positions. Education is one of the most important aspects of human development, and eliminating gender disparity starts by building a foundation with education in the early years, on which to increase the status and capabilities of women as they take their rightful place in teams and in corporate South Africa's boardrooms.

This, the third edition of the DealMakers Women of SA's M&A and Financial

Markets Industry, seeks not only to highlight the incredible women in this space, but also to offer inspiration to young women, and to give them courage where needed, as well as the realisation that they are not alone. Reading these profiles and thought articles, the clear takeaway is that feminine traits bring a different dimension to leadership – one that is more collaborative, empathetic and focused on relationship-building; essential elements necessary to complete a well-rounded team servicing an industry which navigates people dynamics.

This year, this feature will be released at the inaugural Women's Day platinum networking event. The panel facilitator is Lydia Shadrach-Razzino, a partner at Baker McKenzie and a previous winner of the DealMaker of the Year award. She is joined by Janice Johnston, CEO of Edge Growth Ventures, Fawzia Suliman, CFO of the JSE, and Ego Iwegbu, co-founder and CEO of The Good Mineral, MSLONDON Cosmetics and Miss Salon London. 

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Driven by Purpose

LET PURPOSE DIRECT YOUR PATH

Embarking on a new path after nearly two decades with one firm may seem daunting. However, embracing change and seeking new horizons can bring immense fulfilment and rejuvenation to one's work life and purpose.

HOW MY JOURNEY BEGAN

Not many people know the start of my journey – I began studying Industrial Engineering at the then Port Elizabeth Technikon (now Nelson Mandela University), and worked as a trainee junior industrial engineer at “Two-A-Day”, an apple packing factory in Grabouw, a farming town in the Western Cape. I then went on to work at I&J in Woodstock, Cape Town. During my time at I&J, I joined the Employment Equity Committee. Looking back, it is clear to me that my passion for the advancement of the disadvantaged began to emerge there.

At the age of 20, after assessing my opportunities, I decided to return to school and study law. Home is home, and I ended up back at Nelson Mandela University. But this time, I had a purpose – I was one of the oldest in the lecture halls, and I wanted to be the first (and the best) to leave the lecture halls.

And so, I have discovered that purpose sets you apart and steadies you on that path.

WHERE MY JOURNEY LED ME

The path or journey towards fulfilling your purpose – your North Star – is not static. It is ever-evolving, as your external and internal

environments are in a constant state of dynamic tension. My legal journey initially led me to Webber Wentzel, where I thoroughly enjoyed my time and became the lawyer that I am. I joined as a candidate attorney in 2005, and became a partner in 2010. While acquiring mastery of my field, Corporate Law, I learned perseverance. Importantly, I learned how to overcome the odds of walking into a room as an underdog. Proving the room wrong is exciting at first, but quickly becomes old. Purpose keeps me energised, and I look forward to continuing my journey through my association with Poswa Inc as I further intensify my work in Corporate Law. At the same time, at a community level, in particular, I continue to address the barriers that intersectionality has brought, to the benefit of all. I also serve as a non-executive director of Ubuntu Pathways NPC and the Kolisi Foundation NPC, organisations which address inequality and poverty in disadvantaged communities in South Africa.

MY ADVICE TO YOUNG LAWYERS

Do not ignore the realities of where you are. Purpose will allow you to focus on the bigger picture. It renders obstacles or irritations along the way irrelevant, and allows you to focus. Absorb as much as you can. Establish a solid technical foundation and build your competency.

ADVICE TO SOMEONE CONTEMPLATING A CHANGE IN JOBS

Everyone should have a purpose. When you are part of a team, find a meaningful role

within that team in line with your purpose. Take the initiative to find or create that role. Your purpose, as your lodestone, will be defining.

PERSONAL FULFILMENT

Consistent with my purpose, I have embarked on a path as part of a team that is building what our country needs, and is building it with excellence.

We are solidifying a corporate practice of excellence and promoting the excellence of minorities in Corporate South Africa, and these come together to create an even more significant societal impact. Poswa Inc has a unique profile. It is a corporate and commercial law firm that is 100% black owned and managed. On gender, Poswa has 50% women directors, 67% women professional staff, and 74% overall, in terms of staff complement. We bring together a strong team of commercial lawyers with complementary skills and practices, practising across all aspects of commercial law, with brilliance, action and heart. In this way, my purpose is advanced at an accelerated pace.

MY LONG-TERM GOALS IN THIS NEW PHASE OF MY PROFESSIONAL LIFE

To find that happy medium between career and family, career and country, career and impact. There is a happy medium where I can do good and be a successful M&A practitioner, and I believe that my purpose will continue to guide me to greater heights. 🇷🇵