

# DealMakers<sup>®</sup>

## WOMEN 2025



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



**Marylou Greig**  
Editor

Each year on Women's Day, we pause to honour the courage, strength and resilience of women, both past and present, who have broken barriers and paved the way for future generations. In South Africa, this day holds deep historical significance, rooted in the 1956 march of 20,000 women to the Union Buildings in protest against unjust laws. It serves as both a tribute and a call to action; a reminder of how far we've come, and how much further we must go.

Within the South African M&A and financial markets industry, women continue to make strides, often quietly, often against the odds. This sector, long dominated by men, is slowly but surely beginning to recognise the immense value women bring to the table: not only through skill and insight, but through leadership, empathy, resilience and collaboration.

This collection of profiles and personal reflections is a celebration of those women. Each voice is unique, and each journey distinct, but common threads emerge; work hard, believe in yourself, and embrace the guidance and support of others. These stories are rich with lessons: from overcoming doubt to navigating complex deals, from building credibility to mentoring others in the quest to advance the visibility and influence of women in this industry.

It is our hope that these pages serve as more than just a showcase; that they be a source

# FOREWORD

## DealMakers WOMEN 2025

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of inspiration to young women considering careers in finance, law or dealmaking. We hope that they offer encouragement to those who are navigating their own path, and serve as a reminder that they are not alone. Others have walked this road and thrived.

Let this be both a recognition of remarkable women and a beacon for the next generation.

This fifth edition of the feature will be released at the third DealMakers Women's Day networking event, which builds on the previous two years' success and will once again include a panel discussion. This year's panel members are Jo Mitchell-Marias, a Partner in Restructuring, Turnaround & Performance Improvement at Deloitte Africa; Amalia Lui, a Partner at Clyde & Co Tanzania; Shireen Motara, Founder and CEO of The Next Chapter Studio; Soria Hay, Founder and Head of Corporate Finance at Bravura; and Titi Sekhukhune, co-Founder and Partner at Infinite Partners.

My grateful thanks go to this dynamic industry for the continued support and participation in this feature and the networking event. And to my own team, who themselves are women juggling many roles, for their dedication and excellence in compiling this discourse – a collaboration and testament to the talented and resilient women in this space. 🙌

## CONTENTS

3		Panellists - Women's Event
4		Absa CIB
12		Baker McKenzie
21		Bravura Group
22		CDH South Africa
36		Deloitte Africa
44		DLA Piper
49		ENS
57		Investec Bank
63		Nedbank CIB
62		The New Chapter
76		Niche Advisory
78		Nolands Capital
79		Norton Rose Fulbright
80		Poswa
83		PSG Capital
86		Questco
88		Rand Merchant Bank
96		Standard Bank
104		Tamela
106		Vani Chetty Competition Law
107		Webber Wentzel

The feature is available for download - [www.dealmakerssouthafrica.com](http://www.dealmakerssouthafrica.com)

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— OUT OF THE ORDINARY



# Q&A

**Aziza Mohideen**

Sponsor Leveraged Finance Transactor  
Investec Bank

## **What did your path into this field look like – was it intentional, or did you discover it along the way?**

My path was far from intentional. My background was predominantly in audit (a combination of external and internal, both locally and abroad), followed by 18 months in financial reporting. Through various experiences and challenges, I realised there was a drive within me that was not being utilised optimally. After a scenic journey, and exploring many options, I found myself in the fortunate position of being offered a role in Investec's Sponsor Leveraged Finance division. I have been part of the team since April 2023, and am looking forward to what the future holds.

## **Can you share a defining moment or turning point in your career so far?**

I had two misconceptions prior to my current role: 1. A front office role is not suitable for a woman, especially one with a young family 2. A front office role entails being a salesperson. As much as the second point is partially true, it requires a range of skills, both technical and interpersonal. Taking the leap and making a move out of my comfort zone into investment banking was indeed the turning point for me.

## **Have there been key decisions that significantly impacted your career trajectory?**

I completed a short-term secondment in Dallas, Texas, which sparked the desire to move abroad. My husband and I made a bold decision to relocate to Toronto, Canada, where I remained in external audit. The relocation required me to remain in service at the audit firm at the time, which delayed my ability to explore other options.

Shortly after our move back to South Africa in early 2020, I found myself unemployed for 18 months due to the pandemic, resulting in a significant knock to my confidence, which then transformed into ambition to get back out there.

## **How have you balanced your personal life with the demands of a career in finance?**

Transparency and honesty is key. At the onset, I made my boundaries clear, needing to have a window each evening to see to and be with my family. It is difficult to find time for health and wellness, but when time does allow, although usually not at an ideal time of day, I will squeeze in a gym or pampering session.

## **Have your views on work-life balance changed over time?**

Most definitely. Pre-motherhood, stretching the nights and striving to maintain being a top-performer seemed like an acceptable thing to do in the absence of other commitments. Since having children, my priorities have shifted, with the need to create balance and set boundaries becoming more important. I've accepted that a little sacrifice is required on both personal and career fronts.

## **How do you mentor or support other women entering the field?**

I am passionate about investing time in those who are curious or uncertain about the world of finance. By sharing my personal experiences and career history, it allows others to see that not everyone has a clear path to follow, and that exploration is both beneficial and necessary to be in a position of contentment.

## **How has the landscape for women in finance changed since you started?**

When I completed my articles, it was uncommon for a woman to join advisory or take on front office roles. This contributed towards my decision to continue a career in audit, as the generalisation was that a woman in such spaces could not maintain a healthy work-life balance or manage the responsibilities of having a family when the time arose. It has since evolved, with many women having accepted the challenge and created workable solutions where both career and family can be prioritised.

## **What keeps you motivated on tough days?**

Knowing I have my two special daughters and husband to go home to. Daily family dinner is a non-negotiable, as it gives us the ability to connect and be present without any distractions.

## **If you could rewrite one chapter of your journey, what would it be and why?**

Although certain decisions led to some challenging periods, I don't regret them. Each decision was made based on circumstances at the time, which I thought were best for me. These created the experiences, memories and characteristics that have moulded me into who I am today. I would, however, have preferred to be bolder, to have made the harder decisions and explored alternative career opportunities sooner than I had. 🐾



Scan the code to watch Investec's views on balancing risk and reward in South Africa's evolving finance landscape.



# Q&A

**Hlumela Xozwa**

Chief Operating Officer | Investment Banking  
Investec Bank

**What did your path into this field look like – was it intentional, or did you discover it along the way?**

My career in Investment Banking was never intentional, though I knew I wanted to work for a financial institution. During my post graduate studies, I started applying for graduate programmes and was fortunate to be accepted into a Corporate Banking Team within a Graduate Programme, covering clients in sub-Saharan Africa. I had the pleasure of working with the most hardworking and motivating team, and my love for Investment Banking grew by the day. The constant learning and my love for strategic elements are some of the factors that drove me.

During this period, I knew I wanted to focus on strategy and how to go about growing businesses, and so I made the decision to move to a role that would allow me to do more of this at a different bank. The learnings and experience gained there led me to my current role at Investec.

**Have your views on work-life balance changed over time?**

Yes, I am now a strong believer that the work-life “scale” will seldom be perfectly balanced. What is important is that we continuously remember to try and balance the scale, and adjust between the two as and when necessary. This is an area that is constantly changing, depending on the day, month or expectations. What has been important is learning to manage my time, prioritise, and seek support where necessary.

**Did you have any mentors or role models? How did they influence your journey?**

I have been privileged enough to have some great mentors/role models from various backgrounds throughout my career. One of the important things I have learnt is the value of being

trusted and dependable, whether it be in the workplace or in my personal capacity. My mentors emphasised the importance of these characteristics when building long term relationships and credibility, and this influences how I carry myself and the decisions I make.

**How has the landscape for women in finance changed since you started?**

The landscape for women in finance has seen positive shifts since 2015, driven by a combination of increased awareness, dedicated

initiatives like policy interventions, and evolving corporate priorities. We have seen an increased focus on financial inclusion, progressive legislation and labour reforms to ensure equal rights and eliminate discrimination in the workplace. The increased focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) across corporates has also played a role in this positive shift, as well as being intentional about building a robust pipeline of female talent at all levels.

While progress has been made, there is still quite a long way to go, and it's up to us to keep raising awareness and investing in women through initiatives and mentoring.

**What advice would you give to your younger self starting out in this field?**

Have courage, be curious, and always remember that there is no substitute for hard work. Having courage does not always mean being the loudest or being the first to speak, but rather putting your hand up to work on new things, allowing yourself to learn from your mistakes and improve. Being curious means asking questions, showing genuine interest in your work, and being intentional in your actions. Pay close attention to every role and every team environment you encounter, and use these experiences to gain clarity on your personal and professional goals. 📌

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# Q&A

**Joyce Khoathane (Malebye)**

Corporate Finance Consultant  
Investec Bank

**What initially drew you to a career in M&A or corporate finance?**

A combination of factors drew me to corporate finance. I had a strong interest in finance subjects during my time at university, which laid the foundation for my passion in this field, and I find the work mentally stimulating and challenging so the learning never stops. I also appreciate the opportunity to work on projects that are important to the C-suite.

Given the dynamic nature of the industry, no two days are ever the same, and this keeps me engaged which is something I have a love-hate relationship with as finance careers go, this field is highly regarded, and I wanted to prove to myself that I could succeed in the area.

**What did your path into this field look like – was it intentional or did you discover it along the way?**

From the moment I learnt about M&A at university, it was always one of my top three career choices. My options were either asset management, private equity or M&A. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to rotate through these different areas as part of my articles at Investec, and M&A turned out to be the field that aligned best with my strengths, interests and personality. I also give credit to my mentors, who steered me towards M&A because they believed that I would thrive in the field.

**Can you share a defining moment or turning point in your career so far?**

About two years ago, having gained two and a half years of experience in M&A, I got married. Shortly after that, questions

began to surface about when we would start a family, so I took some time for self-reflection to assess whether M&A was a long-term career choice for me, and if it would align with the life my husband and I wanted to build. My husband's continued support was an important consideration for me, given how challenging this field is, and after much discussion, ultimately, the answer was yes. I believe that I still have much to learn and contribute in this field.

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**What was your first deal or transaction like, and what did you take away from it?**

The first live transaction I worked on was Shoprite's acquisition of select Massmart businesses. It was a mix of excitement and nerves as I navigated through a significant amount of detail while managing tight deadlines. I also learnt a lot from being included in meetings where negotiations relating to the transaction took place.

**How have you built resilience in a high-pressure, male-dominated environment?**

By relying on my competence and not letting the imposter syndrome get to me. I also have a strong network of mentors who provide guidance and encouragement. I like to believe that I am resilient, so it takes a lot to break me.

**What keeps you motivated on tough days?**

A number of things, including listening to music, praying about the situation, gym (especially boxing – there is nothing quite like punching away your frustrations), and receiving encouragement from my family, husband and friends to keep pushing forward. 🙌



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# Q&A

**Simone Abramson**  
Corporate Finance Consultant  
Investec Bank

### **What initially drew you to a career in M&A or corporate finance?**

I enjoy the fast-paced environment of M&A, where every day brings new challenges and learning opportunities, and no two days are the same. I am drawn to this career because it is consistently exciting and keeps me actively engaged. Additionally, it is incredibly rewarding to contribute to the growth and transformation of companies in the South African market.

### **What did your path into this field look like – was it intentional or did you discover it along the way?**

My journey into finance has been a blend of intention and fortunate circumstances. I dedicated myself to upskilling by pursuing qualifications such as CA(SA), CFA, and MCom, taking on every opportunity that aligned with finance and accounting to solidify my position in the industry and enhance my chances of success. I was incredibly lucky to land my dream role.

### **Can you share a defining moment or turning point in your career so far?**

A defining moment in my career occurred when I was given the opportunity to project lead a transaction. Initially, I was apprehensive about taking on such a large responsibility, but I recognised it as a chance to prove myself and grow professionally. As I embraced this role, I realised the importance of effective leadership and communication. I worked diligently to align the team around our objectives, ensuring that everyone understood their roles and responsibilities. This experience challenged me to think more critically and strategically.

### **How have you balanced your personal life with the demands of a career in finance?**

Balancing my personal life with the demands of a career in finance has required intentionality and discipline. I've learnt that setting clear boundaries is essential. I prioritise my time by scheduling work commitments and personal activities, ensuring that I allocate time for family, hobbies and self-care.

Ultimately, I believe that a fulfilling personal life contributes to my effectiveness at work, allowing me to approach challenges with a clearer mind and renewed energy.

### **Have your views on work-life balance changed over time?**

Yes, my views on work-life balance have evolved significantly. Early on in my career, I often prioritised work over everything else, believing that long hours and constant availability were necessary for success. However, I soon realised that this approach was not sustainable. As I gained more experience, I began to appreciate the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance. I recognised that taking time for family and friends improves overall wellbeing, while also enhancing productivity and creativity at work.

### **How do you mentor or support other women entering the field?**

I was a mentor for the Investec bursary mentorship programme, where I guided an exceptional young lady studying accounting at the University of Cape Town through her career paths, providing her with support, resources and helping her set goals and navigate challenges to achieve her academic and career aspirations.

### **How has the landscape for women in finance changed since you started?**

There has been a noticeable increase in the number of women entering the finance sector. More women are pursuing careers in finance, leading to a more balanced gender representation in the workforce. The perception of women in finance is evolving, leading to increased support for female professionals. While challenges still exist, the progress made in recent years is encouraging.

### **What keeps you motivated on tough days?**

I view tough days as opportunities for learning and personal growth. Overcoming challenges helps me develop resilience and enhance my skills, which motivates me to push through.

In addition, I find that breaking down larger tasks into smaller, manageable goals helps me maintain a sense of accomplishment throughout the day, keeping my motivation high. 📌



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