Q&A

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Tactical blueprint for the next generation

What is your message for a young woman at university, looking at the long hours and intense pressures of M&A and thinking, “I don’t know if I belong there”?

There were moments early in my own career when I questioned whether I was capable enough, experienced enough or ready enough for the opportunities in front of me.

If you’re drawn to complex deals, solving business problems and making an impact, don’t allow your fears to make you think you don’t belong. It is not an easy field, but it will help you grow and, one day, you will look back and see how far you’ve come.

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One thing I’ve learned is that even the most senior professionals sometimes have imposter syndrome. But they don’t allow it to hold them back, and they work hard so that their work speaks for itself. This is something I have internalised.

That being said, try and gain as much practical experience as you can. I had the opportunity to intern in a few law firms before commencing full time employment. Those experiences helped me understand what I was looking for in my career, as well as the environments and areas of practice that were not the right fit for me.

Beyond mathematical brilliance and financial modelling, what is the single most underappreciated ‘soft skill’ required to survive and excel in capital markets?

I believe the most underappreciated soft skill is emotional intelligence, particularly the ability to listen with intention. By listening carefully and understanding your client, you uncover the commercial issues behind the legal questions, and that’s where you can add real value. If you are able to anticipate the client’s needs, you’ll deliver solutions that go beyond just solving the question you were asked.

Ultimately, the more deeply you understand your client’s objectives, challenges, and priorities, the better positioned you are to deliver practical and commercially relevant advice.

How should junior professionals build a visible, respected personal brand in a regional industry that often prioritises behind-the-scenes execution?

As a junior professional, I would say consistency is the strongest form of branding.

Deliver excellent work, even when no one is watching. Be someone colleagues can rely on, clients can trust, and senior leaders can confidently recommend. Over time, your work begins to speak for you. Share your insights, contribute to professional conversations, mentor others, and remain curious.

Beyond that, there are a number of ways to build your profile and increase your visibility. You can attend conferences, write articles, or even share interesting developments on social media.

I attended a workshop on personal branding recently and one of my key takeaways was, whatever you decide to do for your personal brand, be consistent with it. For example, if you choose to write articles, write them consistently and try to write on the same topic. Over time, this helps build credibility and a strong personal brand in the area where you would like to be recognised.

You should regularly assess whether your chosen approach is effective and re-evaluate where necessary.