



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”?

Here is what I will tell you honestly: it might not be for you, and that is okay. But you owe it to yourself to try before you make that decision. Give it everything you have, lean in fully, and then decide from a place of experience, not fear.

Yes, it is hard. The hours are long. The pressure is real. There will be moments when you ask yourself, “Why am I doing this?” But when the answer that comes back is passion, thrill, and a sense of purpose, then you’ll know that it is for you. And let me tell you something else, there is good money to be made down the line too. This career rewards those who stick with it.

What I have learnt is that you do not have to choose between a fulfilling personal life and a successful career. Not if you genuinely love what you do. When the work excites you, balance is not something you sacrifice; it is something you design around your ambition. Work hard and play hard. They are not opposites. They feed each other.

But yes, free time, ‘me’ time or hobbies may be scarce. You will have to make it happen. Be intentional about it. And whatever you do, whether it is work or life outside of work, be and live intensely.

So try. Show up. Give it your all. You might just surprise yourself.

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

Start by being the person people can rely on, then become indispensable. Become the go-to person, the one we can always count on. Be the person everyone wants to work with. Stand out. People will notice.

But do not forget to put your boundaries in place. You can be dedicated without disappearing into the work entirely.

Put your hand up, volunteer, say yes to opportunities that scare you a little. Every time you step forward, you are telling the market

you are here and you are serious. Those moments add up. They become your track record.

Be likeable. Be genuine. Be the good friend people want to have. Make it easy for people to approach you or talk to you, and stay down to earth. In an industry full of egos, approachability is a superpower. People remember how you made them feel long after they forget the details of a deal.

Your brand is not just what you post online. It’s what people say about you when you are not in the room.

When your strategic advice or valuation is met with heavy scepticism by a traditional, old-school corporate board, what is your personal strategy for reclaiming the floor and defending your thesis?

First, I don’t react. I think, I analyse, and I respond. For me, scepticism is not rejection; it is more an invitation to prove your point. It becomes a challenge, almost a competition, to be able to convince the person in front of you.

If I am prepared, convinced, and know my stuff, my aim is to build an argument and advance my points. But you have to be prepared – that is non-negotiable.

Explain why you are coming up with this advice. Walk them through your reasoning. Show them the path you took to get there. When people see your logic laid out clearly, they are far more likely to follow it.

Also, ask the question: “Help me understand what concerns you most about this approach.” It disarms defensiveness and opens a real conversation. Suddenly you are not on opposite sides of the table, you are solving a problem together.

One must not take things personally. A pushback often has nothing to do with you or your work, if you come prepared. There may be other considerations at play that you can’t see. And it’s okay if they don’t agree with you or your way. You have given the best advice you could at a specific time, being at a specific spot in your career. That is all anyone can ask of you. Stay steady, stay prepared, and trust yourself. The most important thing is to stay calm, clear and grounded. 🙌