



Q&A



BOWMANS

Joyce Karanja

Partner, Kenya

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

A My journey began in primary school, when I fell in love with the legal drama series LA Law. Thereafter, I maintained a steady interest in law and ended up studying both my LLB and LLM (Tax) in the UK.

During my pupillage, I endured my rotations in all the departments as required, but could not wait to return to and settle in the Corporate Department - and I have never looked back!

Being in a leading law firm and being involved in the biggest and most complex M&A transactions was a dream come true for me. After being an M&A lawyer for approximately eight years, I developed an interest in competition law, which was a developing area at that time. With the support and encouragement of my partners, I have become a leading competition lawyer in Kenya.

Q *Were there any women who helped you on your journey?*

A I have been helped mostly by men (perhaps because it was a much more male-dominated space back then). By help, I mean being given opportunities to be involved in the best and most complex transactions and really being pushed into the deep end in a way that helped me realise my potential.

Q *Did you have a female role model? If so, who was she and why was she a role model to you?*

A My mother has been my constant role model – she is hard-working, driven, disciplined, uncompromising, smart, wise, kind, loving and all round a phenomenal woman.

Q *What is the most valuable thing you have learnt from another woman?*

A The importance of being authentic in my career and in my leadership; to use my voice for the greatest good; to take time to understand my audience and then to communicate in a way they will best understand.

Q *What qualities would you say are essential for a woman to thrive in the M&A industry?*

A The same qualities that are essential for a man to thrive in M&A – one has to be technically sound, have a commercial mind, strong interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate effectively, big picture thinking with an eye for detail, be organised and have thick skin. 

