



Q&A



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Q *What, in your opinion, is the hardest part of a transaction?*

A An M&A transaction is always full of surprises. Just when you feel that everything has been thoroughly negotiated and agreed upon, there is a hiccup. For me, over the years, I have seen that the hardest part of a transaction remains the negotiation exercise. It can be very daunting to have all the parties aligned – that middle ground sometimes seems to be as far as the distance from Earth to the Moon. Each party typically has its own set of priorities, financial expectations, and strategic goals. And needless to say, disagreements are inevitable. Managing and resolving these conflicts in a way that keeps the deal on track requires skill and patience, bearing in mind the interests of our client. Communication between counsels, counterparties and other stakeholders is vital, and must be managed efficiently – any miscommunication may send the deal off. Sometimes, in closely held businesses, personal emotions and attachments can influence decisions and complicate the transaction process, and a lot of patience and skill goes into managing the client's expectations and stress toward closing the deal. I remember closing a deal on an individual-owned business, and the seller was still holding onto his file at the time of signature, and you could sense a lot of emotions going on in the room, whilst at the same time, the urge for our client to finally acquire the business. Dealing with the varied

emotions requires tact and skill, which I believe is one of the hardest parts of a transaction.

Q *What advice would you give a young woman working on her first deal?*

A Don't run! Jokes aside, a first deal represents a very big opportunity to finally learn how the M&A world works. There are terms and words that are being used during the meetings or in the emails that you may not be familiar with. My advice is to take one step at a time – you will not learn everything on your first deal; learning is a life-long process.

For your first deal, the first thing I would say is, know your deal inside and out, research the other party, do your due diligence, go through the documentation and prepare your questions, and put them to the senior working on the file. Remember, no question is silly; don't be afraid to ask questions. Your seniors were juniors too at some point, and they asked the same questions. Negotiation can be stressful, but remember to remain calm and stay composed. Always dress in a professional manner when attending a meeting – remember that your appearance can influence first impressions.

Lastly, my advice is to assert yourself; voice your idea and trust your instincts. Once the deal is over, go through the process in your head and think about what could be improved, what you missed, and most importantly, what you learned, so that you can use that knowledge on your next deal.

Q *What do you do to unwind and get away from the stress of work?*

A Spending time with my family has remained, over the years, the best way for me to unwind and get away from the stress of work. I try to make it a must to spend as much time as I can with my family and my kids by organising little trips over the weekend, BBQs, or spending the day at the seaside. I am also a keen player of PlayStation games. And to unwind, I just play my car racing games on the PlayStation. Lastly, I love cooking. All the fancy cooking you see on MasterChef, I try to do at home, and on some occasions, let's say I could have won the title of MasterChef.

FUN FACTS

Favourite colour: Turquoise.

Favourite restaurant: Eighty Eight Chinese Restaurant.

Unusual hobbies: Stamp collecting.

Item on your bucket list: Travel to Japan during the cherry blossom season. 🇯🇵

