

'Be authentic, irrespective of which profession you're in'

By  Sindy Peters

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An attorney, notary, and conveyancer specialising in property and conveyancing, Subashnee Moodley is an example of what one can achieve through perseverance, hard work and authenticity. Now managing director of Livingston Leandy, Moodley worked her way up the firm's ranks to a position of leadership, overcoming the various challenges associated with working in a male-dominated environment, and embracing diversity along the way as key to business success.



Subashnee Moodley, managing director of Livingston Leandy

Moodley is a member of the South African Property Association, Women In Property Network and the South African Institute of Black Property Practitioners (SAIBPP) KZN committee. In 2017 she was awarded the KZN winner in the category Women In Property: Corporate/Private Sector.

We chatted to Moodley to find out more about her rise to the top at Livingston Leandy, what she enjoys most about working in the property sector, how she's overcome some of the challenges she's faced, and what motivates her drive to succeed.

Could you tell us more about yourself and your background leading up to your leadership role at Livingston Leandy?

My background is certainly a very humble one and one that I am proud of because it pushed me to succeed. I grew up in Phoenix, Durban and completed my matric at Stanmore Secondary School. I went to the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 1994 where I completed my BA and LLB degrees. After university I completed an internship at the Constitutional Court and returned to Durban where I commenced articles at Livingston Leandy in 2000. I was admitted as an attorney and conveyancer in 2001 and as a notary public in 2002. I was appointed associate in 2002, and a director in 2003. I was

appointed managing director in 2017.

■ ***You've been particularly active in the property sector. What led you to specialise in property - what's its appeal for you?***

I have spent the last 17 years in the Conveyancing and Property department. I enjoy this particular area of law because it has a strong financial and commercial flavour to it. Being in a department that has the property, commercial and banking / financial aspects to it plays to my strengths and also keeps me passionate about the work that I do. The property market is driven by the economy so being in this department means that one must always be on your toes to re-strategise as the market changes.



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■ ***You have an extensive legal career spanning almost 19 years and have worked your way up to the position of the managing director at Livingston Leandy. What motivates and drives you to succeed?***

The belief that I can bring about change and positively influence and open doors for other young professionals keeps me

motivated. It is wonderful to be in a position where you can drive change, mentor, develop and motivate those within your organisation to become the best versions of themselves. The fact that I can make a difference, whether big or small, keeps me motivated!

■ ***As a black female in the corporate arena, what has been some of the challenges you have faced in your rise up the corporate ladder and how have you overcome them?***

The legal industry is a service and people-centred industry with a complex and diverse nature. As a black female and, more importantly, a previously disadvantaged black female, it was difficult at first to find the confidence to be myself and remain authentic in a male-dominated environment with peers who, unlike myself, had a privileged background. I very quickly learnt that one can only overcome this by being openly receptive to learning and understanding different personalities, backgrounds and cultures. This has helped me significantly in managing and creating respectful, lasting relationships within my team and my network.



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■ ***Gender-based inclusivity in the workplace is a passion of yours. What do you believe is the value in a diverse and inclusionary work environment, particularly in relation to female representation?***

For any business to be successful you need a diverse team, in terms of age, race, gender and culture. This allows for different thought perspectives and ideas which then allows for authentic and creative solutions in business management and decision-making processes.

Often women shy away from management positions because of their other roles as mothers and wives. I truly believe that in the right work environment, a female attorney can be a successful partner and maintain her out-of-office responsibilities as a mother and wife. Creating a workplace that is adaptable enough to retain skilled female attorneys is a continued passion of mine because I believe there are so many brilliant women in the legal landscape who deserve seats at the boardroom table.

■ ***Based on your experience, what advice would you give to other women pursuing a career path similar to yours?***

As with any profession, being an attorney requires hard work, commitment and dedication in order to achieve success. It is important that you become an expert in your chosen area of law and a thought leader that is confident in character and in your abilities. Stand out by producing high quality work and go the extra mile to add value. But, most importantly, having a positive attitude and being a team player is at the centre of success as those are key components to climbing the corporate ladder and building a lasting relationship within your network.



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■ ***Is there a female figure that has had a positive influence on your life?***

The key figures in my life are my mum and my late dad. Both my parents have been an invaluable support structure for myself and my children and have sacrificed a lot in order to pay for my education. Their support when my children were little allowed me to focus on my career goals.

■ ***What is your message for Women's Month?***

My message to all the women out there is;

Be authentic, irrespective of which profession you are in, and true to who you are.

Persevere to achieve your own personal goals. Do not let your circumstances and any obstacles deter you from achieving your goals.

Learn from your failures, it is okay if things don't go as planned as the journey to success is never an easy one.

Keep your eye on your goal by celebrating every win, shaking off the failures, picking yourself up, re-strategising, and keep moving forward because you are on the path to success.

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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