

Consider this

Meet M&G

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Unathi Loos
Portfolio Manager

1. Tell us something about your job that most people don't know.

As you may already know, being a portfolio manager is extremely exciting. Not only do you have the immense responsibility of being a custodian of people's savings, but you also work in an intellectually stimulating environment alongside truly amazing people. As a resources portfolio manager and analyst, I have the opportunity to do site visits at mines in remote and interesting jurisdictions.

2. Tell us about your very first job.

Initially, I studied and qualified as an Occupational Therapist and thereafter practiced at Wexham Park Hospital in Slough, England. It had quite some responsibility attached to it in that I assessed and assisted the elderly to transition out of hospital and settle back into their homes. I am thankful for my OT degree - it taught me to be analytical, methodical in my approach and to harness my problem-solving skills. Although my first job as an OT did not turn out to be what I wanted to do, I took full advantage of the opportunities it presented: paying off my student loans, travelling around Europe and saving a bit as well.

3. What motivated you to pursue a career in financial services?

It didn't take me too long to realise that Occupational Therapy was not for me. In my journey of discovery, I tried out a few other things and sought advice from my mentors before making a determined change into financial services. I had a passion for working with numbers and my school subject choices (accounting, mathematics, etc.) aligned with this shift.

I joined the industry in February 2008 and it was a very exciting time! I started anew on a journey of acquiring skills in finance, both through formal studies and work experience. I spent the next few years deliberately adding to my skillset and pursuing opportunities to advance my career in financial services.

4. What is your go-to career advice for young people at the start of their careers in financial services?

Anything is possible with hard work and determination. Accept that, even if you make a mistake or take a "wrong" turn, nothing is wasted. You need to remain committed to being the best you can be.

5. What do you consider to be the biggest challenges facing this industry?

The low-growth environment and high unemployment in South Africa are headwinds for the investments industry.

6. What are some of the key lessons you have learnt in and about the industry?

I think I have learnt that, in this industry, time matters. It takes a long time to acquire the skills and gain the credibility required to earn the trust of clients and fellow colleagues.

7. What would you consider your greatest achievement thus far?

I am very grateful to have worked with amazing individuals over the past 16 years, both in banking and in asset management. Having the opportunity to study while working, raise a family while working and grow from a junior analyst to a portfolio manager has required a lot of hard work and resilience on my part. Most importantly, it has required the support and trust of clients and colleagues, for which I am tremendously grateful. Being here now is a continuation of that journey for me.

8. What was your first investment – and do you still have it?

The first stock I bought was Reinet and yes, I still have it!

9. What is one of the best books on business/finance/motivation that you've ever read — and why would you recommend it to others?

There are a lot of good books that I have read, so it is hard to pick just one. If I really had to choose, then Daniel Kahneman's 'Thinking, Fast and Slow' stands out for me, because it wonderfully illustrates the behavioural and thought biases that investors are prone to.

10. What would you like to be known for?

I would like to be known as a diligent, able and passionate investor, as well as being kind, fair and as someone who puts the needs of others before her own.

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