Margaux Tait

Sector Lead: Property

What first drew you into property and banking, and why have relationships always been so central to how you work?

It wasn't a deliberate plan. I moved into different roles as doors opened, because of hard work, consistently showing up, and a desire to achieve. Property came through an opportunity to grow into a new role. I've now spent more than 20 years in banking, with around 15 of them in the property sector. What's stayed constant is that I've always enjoyed building relationships with people.

Where does that relationship-led approach come from?

A bit of both nature and experience. I've often played the role of a mediator, out of experiences where I wanted to look out for the people involved. Showing genuine care and respect breaks down barriers and helps us see each other as people first. That builds trust, and a trusted environment creates a willingness to work together, rather than people feeling forced to.

Property relationships are long-term, and reputations follow you. What was it like moving to Nedbank CIB while staying in the same client base?

Moving from 1 bank to Nedbank CIB, while staying in the same sector, stands out as a difficult transition. It was a tough decision, but one I made to grow, and I knew Nedbank CIB had a dominant share of the property market. Property is a long-term game, and the people you deal with are in it for the long term too, so I worried that clients might question my commitment. Instead, the trust I'd built held. Clients saw someone who worked hard and whom they could trust. Moving to a bank with a bigger footprint also allowed me to elevate those conversations and build deeper relationships across a wider client base.

What did difficult markets teach you about what clients need from a banking partner?

Uncertain markets bring out either the best or the worst in people and companies. Where we've stood out, and kept clients' loyalty, is standing by them in hard periods. As an example, the COVID period, and recovery thereafter, meant quickly restructuring loans so we didn't add unnecessary pressure when businesses couldn't operate as before. That flexibility only came from the trust we already had. Clients need us to show up when things are tough, and that's when you truly get to walk the journey together.

What's the 1 deal that stands out to you, and why?

Walking alongside a client as they transitioned from being a capital growth fund, to a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT). As their largest lender and primary banker, trust had been built over time. We supported them through the covenant and gearing adjustments needed to meet the sector's requirements. Later, they restructured their balance sheet with equity providers, which significantly strengthened their balance sheet fundamentals, and we stayed close throughout the process. That patience paid off. We secured the mandate to take them to the debt capital markets, giving them greater lender diversification and more competitive pricing, supported by our sector expertise and willingness to restructure our lending book.

Where do you see the biggest opportunity in property right now?

Where infrastructure development and urbanisation connect logistics around freight corridors, and industrial nodes, alongside the need for affordable and social housing. If those themes come together, with housing, jobs, transport, retail, and healthcare centred around the same economic nodes, the uplift-ment for communities could be enormous. What grabs me isn't the size of the deal; it's whether people come away with greater access, opportunity and a better quality of life.

What does Big Deal Energy mean to you, and how does that connect to how you see women's leadership?

I think about it in 2 ways. 1 is personal: showing up with confidence, carrying on with momentum, knowing your contribution matters. The other is the excitement of a big transaction, from origination through to execution, a contagious energy that keeps a deal team bringing bold ideas. That ties into a misconception still out there, that a quiet woman isn't necessarily a strong leader. Women show up differently in leadership, and it isn't always loud or forceful. Composure is often underestimated when it can be the clearest sign of confident leadership.

What would you tell a younger woman starting out in this industry, and what leadership lesson took you the longest to learn?

Back yourself, believe in yourself, and speak up. Your comments don't need to be the most polished in the room for your voice to deserve space. Your voice has value, so don't diminish yourself or your views to keep the peace. The leadership lesson that took me longest to learn was boundaries. For years, I tried to get everything right, personally and professionally, until I realised it was costing me my health. Now I deliberately protect my quiet time, and running and swimming help me reset. Leadership isn't about carrying everything yourself. It's about creating space for others to grow.

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