

Brent Williams

Chief Executive Officer, Director



Brent Williams has been the Chief Executive Officer/Managing Partner of Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr since April 2011. He has been responsible for leading Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr's strategic direction, rebranding, repositioning in the corporate legal services market and the firm's day to day management since he took office. At the time of his appointment he was the first black legal professional to be appointed the Managing Partner of a major national corporate law firm in the history of the legal profession in South Africa.

About Brent

Under his direction, Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr has undergone significant innovation of its internal economics and business systems that has translated into material improvement of the firm's financial performance, has grown its service offerings and, in particular, has entrenched its dominance as the go to M & A and capital markets law firm in South Africa. Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr, is renowned for being home to the most impressive cohort of black and women partner/directors who are recognized experts in their fields relative to its peer firms and Brent has had the privilege of working with and growing this talent pool as an important component of Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr's transformation initiatives. He is also, through his inclusive, consultative and non-hierarchical management style, credited with maintaining the firm's well-earned reputation of having an exceptionally collegial environment and being a commercially pragmatic and client centric law firm.

Brent is a member of the firm's Executive Committee and while he remains a director in our Corporate and Commercial practice, no longer practices actively. Prior to his appointment as Managing Partner, he practiced and specialised in general corporate and commercial law with particular expertise in mergers and acquisitions, corporate action; and capital markets advice for listed clients in the mining, property loan stock and financial services sectors. He has significant experience with South African economic indigenization (BBBEE) legislation and its application to corporate and commercial transactions, having contributed to the development of aspects of this legislation and advising on the effective structuring of such transactions. Brent is an Attorney of the High Court of South Africa with rights of appearance in the High Courts of South Africa.

Brent began his career in 1989 as a candidate attorney at Y Ebrahim & Co. He remained at Y Ebrahim & Co as an associate, becoming a director in 1995, where he conducted a generalist commercial practice. In 2003, Y Ebrahim & Co was absorbed into the practice of Cliffe Dekker (now Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr) where Brent became a partner/director in its Corporate and Commercial practice area. He joined the firm's management committee a year later. Brent was a lecturer for the Professional Legal Training programme of the Law Society of South Africa until 2004. He has served on outside boards of NGO's and civil society organisations and has been the independent non-executive chairman of JSE listed Sephaku Holdings Ltd since 2012.

Contact Brent

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[Brent on LinkedIn](#)

Expertise

[Corporate & Commercial Law](#)

Mergers & Acquisitions

Listings, Stock Exchanges & Public Documents

Location

Johannesburg

Language

English



Credentials

Education

- BA, University of Cape Town
- BProc, University of the Western Cape
- LLM, Harvard University Law School
- Law Firm Leadership (short course), Harvard Business School
- Year of admission as an attorney: 1992
- Registered with the Legal Practice Council

Law Firm Management Experience

- Managing Partner: Y Ebrahim & Co Inc: 1997 to 2003
- Management Committee Member: Cliffe Dekker: 2004 to 2008
- Executive Committee Member: Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr Inc: 2008 to present
- CEO/Managing Partner: Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr Inc: 2011 to present

Experience

• Public Investment Commission

Lead partner who advised the Public Investment Commission in its acquisition together with Growthpoint Properties of the entity operating the V & A Waterfront to the value of R9.7 billion.

• Lonmin Plc

Lead partner who advised Lonmin Plc in its transaction with Shanduka Resources in the acquisition by Shanduka Resources of an 18% stake in Lonplats and related vendor financing to the value of R2,317 billion.

• Sephaku Holdings and Sephaku Cement

Lead partner who advised Sephaku Holdings and Sephaku Cement regarding the acquisition by Dangote Industries of shares in Sephaku Cement to the value of R800 million. Brent has been independent non-executive Chairman of Sephaku Holdings since 2012.

• Pearson plc.

Lead partner advising Pearson plc. regarding its recent BEE transaction in South Africa.

• Lonmin Plc.

Lead partner advising Lonmin Plc. in respect of the South African law aspects of 2009 rights issue on the JSE and LSE.

• Lonmin plc.

Advisor to Lonmin plc. relating to the review of the corporate finance arrangements with their BEE partners and various corporate action matters pertaining to their secondary listing on the JSE.

• Business Connexion Group

Advisor to Business Connexion Group in respect of corporate action, JSE's listings requirements, share incentive schemes, and general commercial transactions relating acquisition or disposals of assets or businesses and, the drafting and negotiation of the relevant transaction agreements.

• Acucap Properties

Lead advisor to Acucap Properties (M&A and Corporate Finance) in respect of their BEE transaction.

- **Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company**

Lead advisor to Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company (M&A and Corporate Finance) in respect of their BEE transaction.

- **Paramount Property Fund**

Advisor to Paramount Property Fund (M&A and Corporate Finance) in respect of proposed BEE transaction.

- **Coca Cola SA**

Advisor to Coca Cola SA regarding specific JV arrangements with the major bottlers in SA.

- **Various Asset Managers**

Advisor to various asset managers in a range of M&A, BEE and private equity transactions including Acsis, Fairheads Asset Management, TriLinear Asset Managers, and Blue Bay Fund Managers.

- **Neotel**

Advisor to Neotel, the second fixed line network operator in South Africa, in respect of all the transaction agreements pertaining to roll out of national dark fibre infrastructure backbone in collaboration with MTN and Vodacom.

- **Cell C**

Advisor to Cell C in respect of commercial arrangements.

- **Eskom**

Advisor to Eskom, the national energy provider, in relation to some of its long term coal supply agreements with various coal mining houses.

- **BEE driven M&A**

Advised on BEE regulation and has provided transactional/structuring advice for BEE driven mergers and acquisitions, including general advisory assistance to the DTI as part of a team of advisors regarding the erstwhile draft BEE Codes of Good Practice.

News

[CDH's consistent market-leading expertise across Africa recognised in Legal 500 EMEA 2025 rankings](#)

CDH is proud to celebrate another year of recognition in The Legal 500 EMEA 2025 (Legal 500) rankings. Legal 500 is a leading guide that analyses the capabilities of law firms across the world, with a comprehensive research programme revised and updated every year to bring the most up-to-date vision of the global legal market. The guide assesses the strengths of law firms in over 150 jurisdictions, highlighting the practice area teams and experts delivering cutting-edge and innovative services to corporate counsel across the globe.

[CDH thanks clients for their feedback, which contributed to our exceptional Chambers Global 2025 rankings](#)

CDH is honoured to have received significant new and improved rankings in the latest edition of Chambers Global. Chambers and Partners have published guides to the legal profession since 1990, and identify and rank the world's best lawyers and law firms based on in-depth, objective research. We are proud to be recognised as world-class with rankings assessed on criteria that includes technical legal ability, professional conduct, client service, commercial awareness/astuteness, diligence, commitment, and other qualities that the client considers relevant. CDH is honoured to have met these criteria resulting in the following new and improved rankings:

[Celebrating CDH's IFLR1000 2024 Sub-Saharan Africa rankings](#)

CDH ends the year with a strong performance in the IFLR1000 rankings that highlights our in-depth relationships with clients and recognises our renowned expertise in financial and corporate transactional work across Africa. The IFLR1000 has been producing legal market intelligence since 1990 and remains the only international legal directory dedicated to ranking law firms and lawyers on the basis of financial and corporate transactional work.

[CDH Kenya celebrates triumphs at 2024 DealMakers Africa Awards Gala](#)

CDH is delighted to announce its success at the 2024 DealMakers Africa Awards Gala that took place on 15 March 2024, in Lagos, Nigeria.

[Consistency underlies CDH's domination of M&A deal flow for 14 out of 15 years](#)

Leading corporate and commercial law firm, Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr (CDH) continues to cement its market-leading position as one of South Africa's top M&A legal advisers, according to the Ansarada DealMakers Annual Awards, held at the Sandton Convention Centre on 13 February 2024.

Podcasts

[NjeriTalksLaw | Episode 5 - With Brent Williams](#)

On this month's podcast, Partner Njeri Wagacha, in our Kenyan office, speaks to our CEO Brent Williams on his career, CDH, and the alliance that CDH has created with Kieti Law LLP.

[All news by Brent Williams →](#)

Recognition

- Recognition
 - The Legal 500 EMEA 2011-2012 recommended Brent for Corporate and M&A for his "attention to detail" and "depth of knowledge."