



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.

Practice areas

Corporate & Commercial


Sectors

Mergers & Acquisitions


Mining & Minerals

Listings, Stock Exchanges & Public Documents

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Career

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



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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.

Experience

Past selected Commercial, M & A, Capital Markets practice experience

- Advisor on mergers and acquisitions for medium-sized and large private companies, public companies and JSE listed public companies with transactional experience in the following sectors - IT, property loan stock, liquid fuels, asset management, mining, beverage and gaming, including:
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Lead partner advising Pearson plc. regarding its recent BEE transaction in South Africa.
- Lead partner advising Lonmin Plc. in respect of the South African law aspects of 2009 rights issue on the JSE and LSE.
- 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.
- 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.
- Lead advisor to Acucap Properties (M&A and Corporate Finance) in respect of their BEE transaction.
- Lead advisor to Table Mountain Aerial Cableway Company (M&A and Corporate Finance) in respect of their BEE transaction.
- Advisor to Paramount Property Fund (M&A and Corporate Finance) in respect of proposed BEE transaction.
- Advisor to Coca Cola SA regarding specific JV arrangements with the major bottlers in SA.
- 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.
- 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.
- Advisor to Cell C in respect of commercial arrangements.



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- Advisor to Eskom, the national energy provider, in relation to some of its long term coal supply agreements with various coal mining houses.
- 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 prior to its promulgation as the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, No. 53 of 2003 (now amended).

Market Recognition

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

Education

- BA, University of Cape Town
- BProc, University of the Western Cape
- LL.M., Harvard University Law School
- Law Firm Leadership (short course), Harvard Business School
- Adjunct Professor, Department of Mercantile Law, Nelson Mandela University
- 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

Languages

English



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