

**EZRA DAVIDS**

Chairman of Corporate/M&A  
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**Overview**

Ezra Davids is the Chairman of Corporate/M&A at Bowmans specialising in mergers and acquisitions, capital markets, and securities law.

Ezra is the most recent chairman of the Faculty Advisory Board of the Law School of the University of Cape Town. He is also a member of the board of trustees of the Legal Resources Trust (a non-profit human rights organisation using the law as an instrument of justice); a director of Freedom Under Law (a non-profit organisation dedicated to the promotion of the rule of law in Southern Africa), and a patron of the Student Sponsorship Programme (a non-profit organisation that places and enables academically talented, low income students to excel in South Africa's best high schools). He is also the former chairman of the recent developments in M&A subcommittee of the Corporate and M&A Committee of the International Bar Association and is a patron of the Student Sponsorship Programme and a member of the University of Cape Town Council.

Ezra is also the relationship partner for a number of the firm's major clients such as Bharti, Verizon, Barrick Gold Corporation, Microsoft, UPS, Goldman Sachs, Merrill Lynch, UBS, Eskom and Transnet. He is also a regular contributor to international M&A and equity capital markets publications, and is co-contributor on the mergers' chapter of the Modern Company Law text book.

Ezra also became the first practising African lawyer to make the full cover of American Lawyer.

**Experience**

- Ezra was co-lead partner in the firm acting as South African counsel to SAB Miller in its proposed combination with AB InBev (ZAR1.5 trillion/USD 107 billion), the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest M&A transaction ever in the world and the largest in South African M&A history.

Ezra was the lead partner in the following matters:

- acting for Tokyo Stock Exchange listed Kansai Paint Co. Limited in its successful hostile bid for JSE Listed Freeworld Coatings Limited (ZAR 3.3 billion) – which is still the first and only successful cross border hostile bid in South Africa;
- acting as South African counsel to Bharti in its then proposed merger with MTN (USD 24 billion); advising Verizon Communications in its disposal of its subsidiary, Verizon Business (South Africa); acting as South African Counsel to M1 and Investcom in the latter's acquisition by MTN (USD 5.5 billion);
- acting as the lawyers to Dis-Chem, a major South African pharmaceuticals retailer on its recent IPO on the JSE (ZAR 20 billion);
- acting as the lawyers to Alexander Forbes, a major South African financial services company on its IPO on the JSE (ZAR 12 billion);
- acting as the lawyers to PPC (the largest cement company in South Africa) in successfully defending itself in the most high profile shareholders activism in South Africa where there was an attempt to replace the entire board, and in its response to an approach by Afrisam for a proposed combination of the largest and second largest cement manufacturers in South Africa;

- advising Barrick Gold Corporation in its disposal of Barrick Gold South Africa (USD 1.55 billion) and acting for Goldman Sachs and Citigroup in the disposal by Polyus (Norilisk) of its entire shareholding in Gold Fields Limited (USD 2.02 billion);
- for SABMiller in the USD 1 billion BEE transaction for its South African subsidiary;
- for Old Mutual Plc in the aborted negotiations related to the acquisition by HSBC control of Nedbank Limited; and as South African counsel for PPR in the disposal of its furniture and household goods business, Conforama, to JSE-listed Steinhoff International Holdings Limited (ZAR 12 billion).

- Chambers and Partners 2017 ranked Ezra in Band 1 for Mergers & Acquisitions and Equity Capital Markets. They also ranked Ezra in Band 3 for Corporate M&A Africa-wide.
- Best Lawyers in South Africa 2017: Corporate Law, M&A and Mining Law
- The International Who's Who of Mergers & Acquisitions Lawyers 2013 Award: "Ezra Davids is regarded as one of the top 10 Mergers & Acquisitions lawyers globally. Ezra is the only lawyer from Africa on this list and according to Who's Who respondents praise his sophisticated understanding of complex issues."
- He is also ranked leading lawyer by IFLR1000 2016.

*'Ezra Davids is a key partner for equity capital markets matters. Clients appreciate his "very user-friendly advice," noting: "He helps you find a solution rather than just telling you what the problem is. He's also very good at understanding when he should and shouldn't be the lead, and not overstepping the mark." Davids was the lead partner advising Virgin Active Group Holdings on its proposed GBP1.3 billion IPO on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.'* – **Chambers and Partners 2017**

*'Ezra remains highly regarded as one of the standout figures in the field, with particular strength in South Africa. He has an enviable client list and has featured on some of the firm's largest deals, including the acquisition by Anheuser-Busch InBev of SABMiller. He has expertise in capital markets and securities law. He is based in the Johannesburg office.'* – **Chambers and Partners 2017**

*'a highly respected figure in the South African legal community. He was the lead partner overseeing work for the Affiliated Managers Group in its acquisition of a non-controlling stake in fund manager Abax Investments, which represented the client's first such acquisition in an emerging market. Peers continue to regard Davids as "a very dynamic guy," while one client was particularly impressed by his "comprehensive understanding of the economic environment.'* – **Chambers and Partners 2017**

*'highly regarded'* – **Legal 500 2017**

## Publications & Insights

- [Getting The Deal Through – Mergers and Acquisitions – South Africa](#)
- [Getting The Deal Through – Securities Finance 2012](#)
- [Getting The Deal Through Market Intelligence: M&A in South Africa](#)
- [Getting The Deal Through, Market Intelligence – Mergers & Acquisitions, South Africa](#)
- [Getting the Deal Through: Securities Finance 2017](#)
- [Legal Week: Global M&A Guide 2017](#)
- [South African Government proposes strategic partnership between the public and private sector](#)
- [The Chambers Global Practice Guide on Corporate M&A](#)
- [The Mergers & Acquisitions Review – Fifth Edition – South Africa](#)