

# LOIS NORRIS



## CAREER

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**InvestorCOM Inc.**  
Chief Financial Officer

## EDUCATION

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B.B.A. – Wilfrid Laurier University

### What path led you to your current position?

I had my first CFO role relatively early, when I was 32 years old. I was working for Humpty Dumpty and the CEO offered me the position to succeed the retiring CFO, after I had spent just two years there in other finance roles. Although I felt rather unprepared, I was thrilled that the CEO had enough confidence in me to offer this role. I jumped in wholeheartedly and gave the company everything I had. I look back now and realize what an incredible gift it was to be a CFO so early in my career.

After 15 years in the food manufacturing industry, I moved into the tech community, joining Communitech as its CFO. After spending many years in a mature industry, I was energized by the opportunity to work with Communitech's exceptional CEO and team, and to be part of their mission to remove barriers for tech companies as they grow. After four years at Communitech, I made the decision to seek out a high-potential tech company, where I would be part of a team enabling and leading rapid growth. This was a tough decision, as I loved my role at Communitech. However, the timing felt right for me to make the leap. The personal growth opportunity at this stage of my career was incredibly compelling. I initially worked for sensor-based internet-of-things company called blueRover. More recently I joined InvestorCOM, a technology-based investor communications company, as their first CFO. The journey over the last year has been exhilarating: I've grown personally, and have also been able to make a meaningful impact in a short period of time. I believe the best is yet to come.

### What challenges have you faced in your career?

When I look back, one of my greatest fears was public speaking. Over the course of my career, I've had to build my confidence and competence in speaking. In the last couple of years, I've been asked to speak at several events about my career; sharing the perspective of a female business leader. I've learned to relish these engagements. I love the reactions and feedback I receive from audiences, particularly when I'm speaking about matters that come from the heart. I've realized that most accomplishments in life don't come from being "a natural." They are the result of hard work, practice and dedication. It's now on my bucket list to do a TED Talk one day.

### How would you describe your approach to work?

I'm extremely focused and determined when I decide to do something. When I get in that zone or "flow," I can work for hours without getting distracted. In today's world of continuous interruptions, this ability to focus is becoming a rare talent.

### How do you positively impact the people with whom you work?

Giving people confidence to expand beyond their boundaries is important to me. I tend to stay in touch with people that have worked with me in the past. I recently had a coffee with a talented young lady whom I had connected to her current job opportunity. As she spoke, I could see that her experience and confidence had expanded exponentially in her new role, and it makes me ecstatic to think that I was a small part of the growth of her professional life.

### What are some key lessons you would want to share with someone making a major personal or professional decision?

Take a chance. I have learned to ask myself, "What's the worst that could happen?" This helps keep me from overthinking decisions. I also believe you should trust your instinct. Rarely has my instinct steered me wrong in any decision. Even if it doesn't go quite the way I expect, I find

that there is some essential learning that comes as a result. Finally, I think it is important to live without regrets. If something is not working, make the change that's needed.

**List three examples of community involvement that you are particularly proud of and that make you feel like you have made a difference.**

For the last 2 years, I've been Treasurer of the KW Symphony (KWS) Board. Working with the Chair (Catherine Copp) and the Executive Director (Andrew Bennett) to ensure the sustainability of the organization has been tremendously rewarding. As a patron for several years before joining the Board, I valued the Symphony, but through my governance role, I've developed an even deeper appreciation for the value of arts in this community.

I'm also privileged to be Treasurer and on the Board of Shad International, an organization that empowers exceptional youth (grades 10 to 12) to become leaders of tomorrow. I've helped find internship placements for a few of the program participants, including taking two of these students into our company last summer. I have been lucky to benefit from the capabilities of these amazingly bright kids, while they have benefited from seeing the inner workings of a tech company.

I've been involved with an organization called International Women's Forum (IWF) for several years. IWF is a network of accomplished women across the globe, and there is a chapter right here in Kitchener. I had the opportunity to be a mentor through IWF, and have been very proud to watch former mentee's careers blossom during the years.

**What has been one of your most challenging personal experiences?**

My husband was involved in a very serious car accident shortly after we were married. He spent months in the hospital, and I commuted to London three to four times a week to be with him. Initially, I was in a state of shock; I was young (in my 20s), had never faced anything like this, and had no idea how to move forward. So many people, including family, friends, complete strangers, and particularly the partners and staff at KPMG (where I was working at the time) stepped up to offer help in unexpected ways. They gave me strength and enabled us to find the path forward. When I reflect on this time in

my life, I am both awed by the kindness of others, and eternally grateful. One of the most valuable lessons was learning how to accept help from others, which was not a natural ability for me. I have also learned to appreciate all the good fortune that I have, including still having this wonderful man at my side.

**What do you like to do in your personal time?**

I started running marathons about 10 years ago. Although I had run for many years, I never dreamt that long distance runs were within my grasp. Never having participated in athletics, I was energized by the ability to run just a little bit further each week as I trained. Over the years, I have loved the challenge of setting a new personal best target for each run, and finding that I am still getting faster, when I work towards this goal!

**What is your biggest personal goal?**

I've told my friends that I plan to take a year off and run across Canada, coast-to-coast, starting in April 2022. They think I'm a bit crazy, but they also know that I am at least half-serious.

**How do you maintain balance in your work/personal life?**

To me, balance is about having a full life, and being happy at work and at home. The proportions of work and personal life constantly vary, depending on what's important in the moment. True balance is figuring out the right place to be, at the right time. In the summer of 2015, I worked three day weeks during August so that I could spend time with my son before he started high school. I rightly sensed that it was the last of that stage of his childhood and I wanted to cherish that special time.

*Life is 10 percent what happens to me  
and 90 percent how I react to it.*

*- Charles Swindoll*



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# A DAY IN THE LIFE

**Highlight of my day: Seeing my son off in the morning & talking to him before bedtime at night.**

- 6:20 AM My alarm goes off. I listen to the news and weather and then get up.
- 7:45 AM Say goodbye to my son and drive to work.
- 8:00 AM–Noon My regular work activities include: prep for the day, analysis, phone calls, meetings, e-mails, etc.
- Noon–12:15 PM Quick lunch.
- 12:15–6 PM More work (including getting ready for the next day), and after-hours community events.
- 7:00 PM Arrive home and head out for a run.
- 8–8:30 PM Shower and eat dinner.
- 8:30–10 PM Time to catch up with my husband and son, helping with homework. Tidy up personal e-mail and any KWS, IWF or Shad work.
- 10:00 PM Final chat with my son.
- 10:30 PM Time for bed.

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