

“Back for Business offered me regular time to connect with other business owners and compare notes. The learnings you get at a round-table discussion are great. Whatever your problem, you get to a solution faster than if you were working alone.”

## ALVA HORGAN

### LoanGuru.ie Business Finance



Alva Horgan was at first overawed when she began researching starting her own business in Ireland. After a ten-year spell in Asia, where entrepreneurship was nurtured through the provision of work and start-up hubs, her own country's offering seemed small by comparison. However, driven by a sense of shared identity with the underserved founders of SMEs and 20 years' experience in finance and technology, she eventually landed on the right idea.

An undergraduate in Business and Company Law from Waterford Institute of Technology, Alva went on to study professionally as a Chartered Corporate Specialist with the Institute of Chartered Specialists in the UK, before travelling to Singapore in 2008 to take up the role of senior manager with Price Waterhouse Cooper. She also has a post grad in Innovation and Enterprise Development from Trinity College.

A three-year spell with the global financial hub ended when she became managing director of a start-up in Bangkok, a switch that ultimately led to her setting up her own holiday booking platform from her base in the Thai capital.

Alva returned to Ireland in 2018. Having

worked in a peer-to-peer lending firm in Dublin as head of sales, she noticed that the company's strict lending criteria was stopping perfectly viable SMEs from obtaining business loans. From that experience, she was inspired to set up LoanGuru.ie Business Finance, a company that matches SMEs with alternative lenders for funding solutions.

The company, which now employs five full-time staff based out of its office on Adelaide Road in Dublin, played a vital support role to struggling firms during the Covid-19 pandemic, when high-street lenders dramatically lowered their risk threshold, just as businesses were being hit hardest by public health restrictions.

“I set up LoanGuru.ie Business Finance because I wanted to help SMEs. During the pandemic, that's exactly what I got to do. We helped a great number of businesses, by matching them with the correct lender and getting the financial product, assistance and extra cashflow in place. Because of that they were able to get through, which is something we're really proud of,” she says.

Alva expects that major changes in the Irish banking market will lead to further growth for LoanGuru.ie Business Finance

in the next years. “Ulster Bank and KBC are pulling out. That means that only Bank of Ireland, Allied Irish Bank and Permanent TSB are left. And only a couple of them are competitive in terms of business loans. We need more alternative lenders in the market – and LoanGuru.ie Business Finance is in a position to develop partnerships with them,” she says.

LoanGuru.ie Business Finance now counts YouLend UK and a range of Irish lenders among its partners.

Alva started the Back for Business programme in February 2021 and credits its focus on short and medium-term goals, as well as the overall collaborative process, with helping her grow the business during the pandemic.

“The sessions offered me a dedicated period to connect with other business owners and compare notes. The learnings you get at a round-table discussion are great. Whatever your problem, you get to a solution faster than if you were working alone.

“Back for Business encouraged me to set goals to achieve by the end of the programme. One was to launch my new website, which I had put on the backburner for too long. That was a great achievement for me.”



#### POSITION

Managing Director

#### WHAT WE DO

LoanGuru.ie Business Finance matches SMEs with alternative lenders in Ireland and the UK for finance solutions.

#### CONTACT US

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