

NOLA SIMON

Everyday Futurism

Keynote Speaker & Strategic Advisor

Before leaders commit to a strategy, a rollout, or a budget, there is a brief window when assumptions are still visible.

Nola Simon helps executive teams use that window — before assumptions harden into decisions, and decisions harden into policy.

SIGNATURE TOPICS

- Better decisions before direction calcifies
- Witnessed Trust — what people actually trust
- AI adoption before assumptions become strategy

WHY PLANNERS BOOK NOLA

- Rigorous, conversational keynote style
- 45–60 min, fully customized
- Typically no slides — slides available if needed

SELECTED CREDENTIALS

LinkedIn Top Voice 2024 & 2025

Elevate Festival speaker (2022)

Maclean's · CTV News · CBC · Newstalk 1010

17 yrs Manulife/John Hancock — cross-border ops & billion-dollar vendor relationships

TO BOOK OR INQUIRE

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The future isn't predicted. It's practiced.

What Nola does

Nola Simon works in the window before decisions calcify.

As a keynote speaker and strategic advisor, she helps C-suite and senior leaders surface the assumptions underneath their next move — before those assumptions become decisions, and decisions become policy.

Her named methodology, the Assumption-Ground Audit, draws on intellectual history, mathematics, and 17 years inside financial services institutions on both sides of the Canada-US border — including billion-dollar vendor relationships. Not a framework for comfort — a framework for clarity.



Her practice: Everyday Futurism.

Navigating an uncertain future isn't a prediction problem. It's a pre-adoption problem.

What audiences leave with

Not a feeling. A question they can't un-ask.

Her talks are built around a single recognition: the ground most organizations stand on is made of assumptions — and noticing that early is a competitive advantage.

Whether the topic is AI adoption, organizational change, or leadership under uncertainty, the throughline holds:

“ *What are we taking for granted, and what does it cost us not to know?* ”

The talks

*These are sample talks — all topics and formats are fully customizable to your audience and event.
Nola performs without slides by default and finds it produces better results, but slides are available if your event requires them.*

TALK 1

What You're Not Asking Before You Commit

The most important decision your organization makes is already half-made.

THE PREMISE

Every consequential decision has a pre-decision — a moment when direction isn't fixed and "are we sure about this?" still has traction. Most teams skip it. Not out of negligence. Out of momentum.

WHAT THEY EXPERIENCE

Nola walks a live case through the Assumption-Ground Audit in real time. The audience doesn't watch an analysis. They do one.

WHAT THEY LEAVE WITH

A diagnostic question for the next decision they're already inside. Vocabulary for what they've been sensing but couldn't articulate.

"Moving fast feels like moving forward. The difference only becomes visible later — and later is expensive."

BEST FOR: Leadership teams navigating transformation, strategic change, or directional uncertainty.
45–60 min · Typically no slides · Executive offsites, leadership summits, strategic planning events

TALK 2

Witnessed Trust

Trust isn't built. It's caught.

THE PREMISE

Most organizations have a trust strategy. None of it is what their people actually trust. What people trust is what they witness — the unscripted moment, the unconsidered reaction when no one was watching.

WHAT THEY EXPERIENCE

The distinction between self-authored and witnessed trust signals, applied to real cases. Why standard responses — better messaging, more transparency theater — tend to make it worse.

WHAT THEY LEAVE WITH

A framework to apply before the next communication goes out, the next policy lands, or the next crisis requires explanation.

"In person, it's noticed. Digitally, it's amplified. Through AI, it's perpetuated."

BEST FOR: Organizations where trust has been disrupted, is under pressure, or is quietly eroding.
45–60 min · Typically no slides · Leadership conferences, PR summits, culture offsites

TALK 3

Before You Commit

The most important AI decision your organization will make is happening right now — informally.

THE PREMISE

AI strategy doesn't begin when you choose a tool. It begins in conversations that shaped what nolasimon.com · nola@nolasimon.com counted as a problem, assumptions about efficiency left unexamined,

WHAT THEY EXPERIENCE

The pre-adoption window mapped in real time. What gets decided informally, what gets inherited from vendor framing, what gets skipped because momentum felt like clarity.

WHAT THEY LEAVE WITH

A way to identify whether their pre-adoption window is still open. Questions that slow the right decisions without stalling the organization.

For event planners

Nola speaks to executives and senior decision-makers navigating complexity, AI adoption, and organizational change. Her talks are rigorous and conversational — deliberately uncomfortable in exactly the ways that produce clarity.

IDEAL CONTEXTS

- Leadership summits and executive offsites
- Strategic planning retreats
- AI adoption and technology conferences
- Organizational culture and change events
- Future of work keynotes

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Conversational format, typically no slides (slides available)
- 45–60 minute keynotes
- Pre-event planning call included
- Content customized to your audience and context
- Audiences leave with something immediately applicable

Credentials & speaking history

LinkedIn Top Voice

2024 and 2025

Maclean's Magazine

"Why I Made a Midlife Career Switch" — September 2024

Elevate Festival

Work Shift Stage speaker, 2022 (Toronto)

CTV News Toronto

National syndication across 8+ markets — Winnipeg, Calgary, Vancouver Island, and more

Newstalk 1010 / iHeartRadio

National radio pickup

Hope + Possibilities Podcast

Top 10% globally (Listen Notes) · Top 10 Leadership (Goodpods) · 109+ episodes

Financial Services Background

17 years at Manulife / John Hancock — cross-border Canada–US operations, billion-dollar vendor relationships, and pattern recognition from inside institutions at scale



I can't tell you how many people have told me they would quit.

Nola Simon — CTV News Toronto, syndicated nationally across Canada

What people say

"What I appreciate about you, Nola, is you sense things before they happen. A true Futurist Thinker."

Kerri Twigg

Leadership Development Specialist & LinkedIn Top Voice,
Manitoba Hydro

"Whenever we needed someone who would go the extra mile, take time to develop long-lasting relationships and deliver outstanding service, we chose Nola."

Joanna Lohrenz

Senior Executive, Transformation, Financial Services

"Nola, you are really one of the smartest I know. Like well-rounded intellect with deep emotional intelligence. You are not the average user. You think beyond the surface."

Dr. Kem-Laurin Lubin

Sr. UX Strategist & AI Researcher, Ph.D.-C, University of Waterloo

"Nola was absolutely pivotal in the communications space. Her innate talent for change management was enormously helpful."

Ryan Marek

Manager, Strategy, Manulife Bank

AS SEEN IN / FEATURED AT

Maclean's · CBC · CBC Radio · CBC News · CTV News · CityNews · Newstalk 1010 · The Canadian Press · Reworked · Elevate Festival 2022

For those who've seen her speak

If something landed — and you're wondering what it would look like to bring that thinking into your organization — that's where the Assumption-Ground Audit comes in.

Nola works with C-suite and senior leadership teams before a direction is committed — making visible what's being taken for granted, so the decision that follows is actually chosen, not inherited.

The triptych

- **What You're Not Asking Before You Commit**
Decision-making
- **Witnessed Trust**
Trust & reputation
- **Before You Commit**
AI adoption

To book or inquire

- Book a call:** tidycal.com/nola/intro-consultation-nola-simon
- Email:** nola@nolasimon.com
- Website:** nolasimon.com
- Advisory:** nolasimon.com/advisory-speaking
- Headshots:** nolasimon.com/media
- LinkedIn:** LinkedIn Top Voice 2024 & 2025
- Podcast:** @nolasimontjo on Goodpods

The future isn't predicted. It's practiced.

All three talks. One body of work.

Each talk is a distinct entry point into the same underlying practice. Together they give a planner options — without making the positioning feel scattered.

What You're Not Asking Before You Commit

Decision-making

Buyer's fear: *We chose wrong*

Witnessed Trust

Trust & reputation

Buyer's fear: *We've lost credibility*

Before You Commit

AI adoption

Buyer's fear: *We're moving too fast*

