Iven Shishkalov

Software Architect, Platform Engineer (Cloud, AI)

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summary

Software & Cloud Engineer turned startup CTO. 5+ years building distributed systems, multicloud infrastructure, and developer-centric platforms. Went from building a managed Kubernetes BYOC platform to leading an AI startup as Founding Engineer and CTO. Track record of turning ideas into scalable products, cutting cloud spend, and building happy, high-performing teams. Currently seeking challenges at the intersection of infrastructure, AI, and developer experience.

experience

Technical Co-Founder
Stealth Healthtech Startup

Aug 2025 - Present
UK

- Built a multi-step ingestion pipeline for a knowledge corpus made of research papers, expert Q&A recordings, and articles. Transcription, cleaning, LLM-as-a-judge relevance scoring, chunking, hybrid retrieval using Qdrant
- Implemented agent memory and context manager beyond RAG: KG, sleep-time compute for between-session reasoning, re-anchoring of critical context, agent durability with Temporal, guardrails on a finetuned safety classifier, evals with deepeval
- Designed a PII de-identification layer that uses generalization, pseudonymization with identity domain separation, per-user crypto shredding (data irrecoverable even in backups), ensuring compliance with GDPR and EU AI Act
- Shipped a real-time voice agent (Livekit, ElevenLabs) optimized for low latency end-to-end, React/Next.js PWA; self-hosted Kubernetes, autoscaling with KEDA

Founding Engineer, CTO
Software Vrienden

May 2023 - Oct 2025
Deventer, NL

- Led engineering through multiple pivots from a manual recruiting agency to an AI-matching tech platform & SaaS
- Architected and shipped LLM-assisted matching that cut false-positive matches by 75%; built a custom jobs crawling/scraping engine allowing non-engineers to launch new scrapers in 5 minutes; increased job ingestion by 10x
- Brought our cloud bill to $0 for 2 years while modernizing the platform and reinvesting $30k+ annual savings into product
- Replaced Notion-backed operational databases with a high-performance ETL (Dagster), removing rate limits and cutting internal API latency from 10s to <200ms
- Built internal RAG and tools to accelerate sales; helped close a €100k pre-seed round; led a remote team of 5 engineers

Cloud Platform Owner, Product Owner (part-time contract)
Improvers (subsidiary of Essent)

Jan 2024 - Dec 2024
Utrecht, NL

- Owned the technical roadmap to productize an internal Salesforce-wrapper tool into a SaaS for 200+ paying customers
- Built a self-service platform from zero on AWS (EKS/Lambda) for 100+ microservices, taking zero-to-prod from days to minutes
- Implemented cost/performance improvements (autoscaling, spot strategy, rightsizing), cutting AWS spend by 60% while keeping delivery speed high
- Embedded privacy-by-design and security guardrails into CI/CD (wrote a custom Jenkins lib for safe-defaults, secret injection, auditability), and coached dev teams

Software Engineer
Avisi Cloud

Nov 2021 - May 2023
Arnhem, NL

- Took ownership of the billing & self-service layers to launch an enterprise-grade managed Kubernetes PaaS in 6 months
- Built the usage-based billing engine from scratch, public (REST) and internal (gRPC) APIs with Go, Java, NATS, Stripe
- Built the self-service flow (Angular, Spring) and personally demoed at KubeCon booth, securing the first 30+ signups

Associate Software Engineer
TomTom

Jan 2019 - Jan 2021
Amsterdam, NL

- Built release tooling (Node.js, Angular) and automations that cut coordination effort by 50% across 20+ engineering teams

education

BSc Information & Communication Technology
Saxion University of Applied Sciences

2017 - 2022
Deventer, Netherlands

- Thesis: Multicluster K8s Architectures - Networking & Scheduling (10/10), GPA 3.8/4.0

skills

code	Python, Go, Java, Node.js, Angular, React, Astro
ai/ml	RAG, MLOps, evals (deepeval), guardrails, LlamaIndex, Langchain, MCPs, durable agents
cloud/infra	Kubernetes (EKS, GKE, bare-metal, BYOC), multicloud, AWS, GCP, OVH, GPUs, FinOps, Terraform, Helm
data	Postgres, Qdrant, CockroachDB, Redis, NATS, RabbitMQ, Dagster, Meilisearch
platforms & dx	Backstage, GitOps, ArgoCD, GitHub Actions, Jenkins, GitLab CI, Prometheus, Sentry, Temporal