

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

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)

Jan 2024 - Dec 2024

Improvers (subsidiary of Essent)

Utrecht, NL

- Owned the technical roadmap to productize an internal Salesforce-wrapper tool into a SaaS for 200+ paying customers
- Built a self-service cloud 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

Nov 2021 - May 2023

Avisi Cloud

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
- Prototyped advanced multicloud & multi-cluster setups (networking, scheduling) on the K8s platform with Linkerd, Ligo, NSM

Associate Software Engineer - Change & Release Management

Jan 2019 - Jan 2021

TomTom

Amsterdam, NL

- Built a release scheduler app (Node.js, Angular) that cut manual release coordination effort by 50% across 20+ engineering teams; integrated DORA (Accelerate KPIs) metrics tracking for 70+ applications
- Built automations in ServiceNow to manage change announcements for key enterprise customers (Volkswagen, Daimler, BMW), improving communication speed and accuracy

education

BSc Information & Communication Technology

2017 - 2022

Saxion University of Applied Sciences

Deventer, Netherlands

- Graduated with a 10/10 thesis on Multicluster Kubernetes Architectures: Networking and Scheduling
- GPA 3.8/4.0

skills

code	Python, Go, Java, JavaScript/TypeScript, Angular, React, Vue, Astro
data	Postgres, CockroachDB, Qdrant, Redis, MemO, Dagster, Meilisearch, NATS, RabbitMQ
cloud/infra	Multicloud, AWS, GCP, Private/Hybrid, GPUs, FinOps, Terraform, Helm, Kustomize, CDK, Crossplane, Temporal, External Secrets, service mesh
platforms	Kubernetes (many flavors), Backstage, Prometheus, Sentry, DevEx, distributed systems
ci/cd	Jenkins, GitHub Actions, GitLab CI, ArgoCD, Gitea
ai	MLOps, LLMs, MCPs, RAG, durable agents, Langchain, finetuning, evals/guardrails