Simon Aquino

Forward Deployed Engineer · Principal Platform Engineer · AI-Native Cloud Architect (AWS/GCP/Azure)

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Executive Profile

Forward Deployed Engineer with 15+ years of experience architecting and engineering hyper-scale distributed systems. I operate at the intersection of technical strategy and hands-on execution, embedding directly with client teams to deliver mission-critical infrastructure while simultaneously elevating their engineering capabilities. I specialise in translating business objectives into robust "Golden Path" Internal Developer Platforms, leveraging AWS/Azure/GCP to ensure delivery impact while cultivating team autonomy through mentorship and technical leadership.

- **Strategic Technical Delivery:** I bridge the gap between architectural vision and production reality. I partner with leadership to define technical roadmaps and then lead the hands-on implementation, delivering firm-wide infrastructure (e.g., global Kubernetes fleets managed via GitHub and Helm) that directly enables business goals.
- **Advanced Cloud Native Engineering:** Deep expertise in orchestrating massive container ecosystems. I extend Kubernetes primitives using custom controllers and Operators (Go/Python) effectively solving complex multi-tenant and cross-cloud challenges.
- **Embedded Enablement & Leadership:** I drive culture change by working alongside engineers. I assume a "playing coach" role—pairing, mentoring, and upskilling teams on complex CI/CD pipelines and modern stacks to instil engineering rigour and ensure system evolution.
- **SRE & Operational Resilience:** I engineer reliability into the core platform. I champion a Site Reliability Engineering culture, implementing observability, error budgeting, and self-healing mechanisms to guarantee high availability and system resilience under scale.

Professional Experience

Barclays (Payments Incubator)
London, UK
PRINCIPAL PLATFORM CONSULTANT (CONTRACT)
Oct. 2025 - Present

- **Greenfield IDP Engineering:** Architected and built a high-performance Internal Developer Platform (IDP) on AWS and Kubernetes (EKS). Managed configuration via Helm and GitHub, developing "Golden Path" templates in Go/Python that abstract complexity and optimise DevEx.
- **Embedded Workforce Transformation:** Operating as a technical "player-coach" within legacy software teams. I drive Cloud-Native adoption through daily pair programming, upskilling engineers on CI/CD pipelines and SRE best practices to ensure long-term autonomy.
- **High-Stakes Execution:** Technical Authority for critical payment rails. Delivering a secure, self-service ecosystem that balances strict financial governance with the agility required for high-throughput data integrations and future GenAI workloads.

JPMorgan Chase / Core Engineering Consulting Group
London, UK
ENGINEERING MANAGER, PLATFORM LEAD (CONSULTANT)
Apr. 2023 - Sep. 2025

- **Embedded Scaling & Enablement:** Embedded within the Cloud Enablement team to drive technical scaling from 3 to 50+ engineers. I paired daily with the workforce to establish a "You Build It, You Run It" culture, upskilling teams on SRE best practices and modern cloud-native tech.
- **Hyper-Scale Kubernetes Architecture:** Architected and engineered the firm-wide GCP foundation and Kubernetes ecosystem (100+ clusters). Delivered AI-ready blueprints integrating Vertex AI and data pipelines, enabling secure transition to data-intensive GenAI workloads.
- **Golden Path Engineering:** Engineered a "Golden Path" strategy that abstracted infrastructure complexity using Crossplane and GitOps. Drastically reduced cognitive load and improved DevEx and system observability (Prometheus/Grafana) for thousands of internal developers.
- **Strategic Technical Execution:** Acted as a bridge between business goals and engineering execution. Translated high-level objectives into executable technical roadmaps and managed the hands-on delivery of complex distributed systems.

Deloitte
Copenhagen, Denmark
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVOPS LEAD (CONTRACT)
Mar. 2021 - Mar. 2023

- **Hands-on Embedded Leadership:** Embedded as the technical lead for Denmark's critical Property Tax Platform. I actively coded alongside cross-functional engineers, breaking down architectural silos and upskilling the team to own the solution independently.
- **Infrastructure Modernisation:** Parachuted in to audit and execute a ruthlessly efficient consolidation strategy for a sprawling infrastructure estate. Simplified legacy complexity and slashed monthly cloud operational costs on AWS while boosting system performance.
- **API Gateway Re-Engineering:** Eradicated high-risk technical debt by replacing brittle custom authentication with managed AWS API Gateway.

Microsoft
London, UK
PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT - AZURE
Nov. 2020 - Mar. 2021

- **High-Frequency Trading Acceleration:** Rescued a stalled on-prem to Azure migration for a major trading platform. Optimised AKS and EventHubs architectures to handle massive throughput, condensing the delivery timeline from years to months.
- **Strategic Enablement:** Delivered the first fully automated development environment, acting as the technical bridge between client business units and Microsoft Product Engineering to unblock critical delivery paths.

Loveholidays   *London, UK*

Lead Platform Engineer - GCP   *Mar. 2020 - Oct. 2020*

- **Performance Engineering:** Diagnosed and resolved critical latency bottlenecks in the core search engine. Profiled Go/Java microservices to optimise Kubernetes autoscaling, achieving a 30% performance increase.
- **Event-Driven Architecture:** Designed and developed a custom Go library for real-time database synchronisation via GCS, reducing data propagation latency from minutes to seconds to improve customer search accuracy.

eBay   *Berlin, Germany*

Lead DevOps Engineer - GCP   *Jun. 2019 - Mar. 2020*

- **Global Cloud Transformation:** Orchestrated the strategic migration of eBay's Classifieds vertical to Google Cloud (GCP). Architected standardised GKE workflows to enable rapid deployment for distributed engineering teams across Europe.

Previous Engagements (Select Highlights)   *Europe*

Senior DevOps Engineer / Consultant   *2010 - 2019*

- **Deloitte (Copenhagen):** Architected immutable AWS infrastructure for critical Danish Tax systems, introducing Terraform (IaC) to reduce deployment frequency from weeks to hours.
- **Element Insurance (Berlin):** Built the greenfield AWS/Kubernetes foundation for a high-growth FinTech startup, serving as Interim Team Lead to scale early engineering capability.
- **HMRC (London):** Core WebOps Engineer for the UK's hyper-scale digital tax platform; contributed to open-source tooling to ensure multi-cloud resilience during peak filing windows.
- **Google (London/Dublin):** Developed Python/App Engine automation tools to optimise internal engineering workflows, awarded multiple peer bonuses for code quality and innovation.

Skills

Cloud Native Ecosystem	Kubernetes (Expert), AWS, GCP, Azure, Helm, Terraform, Crossplane, GitOps (ArgoCD/Flux), Istio, Internal Developer Platforms (IDP).
Languages & Engineering	Go, Python, Java/Spring Boot, Bash, Distributed Systems Design, Event-Driven Architecture, Microservices, API Design (gRPC/REST).
SRE, DevOps & Security	GitHub Actions, CI/CD Pipelines, Prometheus, Grafana, Datadog, Site Reliability Engineering (SRE), DevSecOps, Zero Trust, Chaos Engineering.
Technical Leadership	Technical Strategy, Pair Programming, Workforce Upskilling, Developer Experience (DevEx), Team Scaling, Stakeholder Management, "Golden Path" Architecture, FinOps.

Education

University of Bristol   *Bristol, UK*

Master of Engineering (MEng) Hons in Computer Science and Electronics   *2012*

Languages

English	C2 - Native / Bilingual Proficiency
Italian	C2 - Native / Bilingual Proficiency
German	B2 - Professional Working Proficiency
Danish	A2 - Elementary Proficiency

Certificates

2025	**Google Cloud Platform (GCP),**	Professional Cloud Architect (PCA)
2025	**Google Cloud Platform (GCP),**	Generative AI Leader
2015	**Scrum Alliance,**	Certified ScrumMaster (CSM)
2014	**UK Government,**	UK Security Clearance (SC) [Previous]
2014	**Red Hat,**	Red Hat Certified System Administrator (RHCSA)
2013	**VMware,**	Certified Advanced Professional 5 - Data Centre Admin (VCAP5-DCA)
2013	**VMware,**	Certified Professional 5 - Data Centre Virtualisation (VCP5-DV)
2011	**Google,**	Python Readability (Internal Code Quality Award)