Cedric Kienzler

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Technical Lead, Site Reliability Engineer

Experienced technical leader with a proven track record of leading teams, shaping strategy, and driving large-scale reliability initiatives. Adept at mentoring engineers, setting technical direction, and aligning engineering efforts with business goals to maximise impact.

Expert in distributed systems architecture, low-level systems programming, and cloud-native platforms, with hands-on experience designing, operating, and optimising highly available, large-scale infrastructure.

Recognised for driving cross-organisational change, collaborating with stakeholders, service teams, and leadership to implement best practices in SRE, observability, and incident management. Led initiatives that reduced incident resolution time, increased deployment reliability, and enhanced service resilience.

A trusted mentor and technical evangelist, having contributed to the Azure SRE Playbook, organised learning sessions, and onboarded engineers globally. Public speaker on Kubernetes, SRE, Observability, and Chaos Engineering, with a passion for fostering high-performing engineering cultures.

- Technical Leadership & Mentorship
- Key Stakeholder Management
- Staff Training

- Distributed Systems & Low-Level Systems Programming
- Chaos Engineering & Resilience Testing
- CI/CD, Deployment Orchestration, Infrastructure as Code

Career Experience

Senior Site Reliability Engineer / Technical Lead, Microsoft, Hamburg, Germany   02/2022 to Present

Technical Lead in Azure's Safe Change infrastructure SRE Team, responsible for chaos engineering, resiliency validation, and release infrastructure Harmonisation: Led the modernisation of Azure's release infrastructure, migrating 60+ repositories and 600+ pipelines, increasing deployment reliability and speed across multiple critical customer-facing services including, among others, Azure Cosmos DB, Log Analytics, Web Apps & Function Apps.

- **Platform Engineering & DevOps Expertise**: Developed platform tooling improvements to streamline engineering workflows and improve developer experience and led shift-left initiatives, integrating early validation mechanisms to catch issues earlier in the development lifecycle.
- **Chaos Engineering & Resilience Validation**: Designed and implemented Chaos Engineering experiments to validate system failure hypotheses covering 80% of high-impact critical customer scenarios and improve resilience strategies and built synthetic monitoring and business validation testing to proactively identify and mitigate reliability risks.
- **Organised multiple internal learning sessions**, developing a 9-part self-guided onboarding tutorial as part of the SRE Academy, enabling new engineers to onboard 75% faster to the new release system.
- **Leadership and Team Management**: Technical lead & Scrum Master for my immediate team of 5 engineers, responsible for setting technical direction, mentoring, and defining strategies and goals for the team as well as the broader department, serving as the technical lead for a newly formed team within the Safe Change Infrastructure SRE organisation, and supporting to multiple program managers and teams from across three other SRE organisations in bootstrapping new SRE engagements.

- **Cross-Org Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement**: Partnered with 10+ service teams across Azure to help them migrate to the new release system, contributing high-quality pull requests to their repositories as best-practice examples driving down change related outages by 20%.
- **SRE Best Practices an Knowledge Sharing**: Core Contributor & Committee Member for the Azure SRE Playbook, authoring a new SRE pattern with 3 sub-patterns and overseeing the review and integration of 3 additional major patterns.
- **Technical Evangelism & Internal Training**: Speaker at Azure SRE Tech Talks, delivering sessions on reliability, deployment strategies, and platform engineering.
- **Maintained and expanded the Azure SRE Wiki**, working across all SRE organisations to standardise and document operational excellence.
- **Recognition & Awards**: Azure Reliability Quality Star – Leadership Excellence Award for sustained high-quality contributions to Azure's engineering culture and reliability improvements.

Tech-lead Manager Kubernetes SRE, German Edge Cloud, Hamburg, Germany   07/2020 to 01/2022

Built and led the Kubernetes SRE Team: Established and scaled a remote team from two to 6 highly skilled SREs, taking full ownership of the company's Managed Kubernetes Platform, spread across 3 availability zones and hosting 50+ customer clusters. Ensured only high-quality changes made it into production by reviewing code, design documents, and architecture changes daily, implementing state of the art GitOps tooling and observability, resulting in a 75% reduction in change related outages over 12 months.

- **Incident & Change Management**: Developed and implemented new incident, change, and problem management processes, improving reliability and operational efficiency, enabling an average 10 minute time-to-engage and reducing time-to-mitigation by several hours on average through more streamlined and efficient incident management processes and standard operating procedures.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration**: Worked closely with the Service Management team to improve incident response, change reviews, and operational excellence as well as the Infrastructure, OpenStack, and CEPH Storage teams, ensuring seamless integration and optimised performance across compute, storage, and networking layers resulting in 10% increased storage throughput and decrease in etcd commit latencies driving customer satisfaction.
- **Platform & Product Leadership**: Took on the Product and Platform Owner role, shielding the team from unnecessary business complexity while aligning priorities with company strategy and CTO directives.
- **Financial Oversight & Cost Optimisation**: Managed the budget for the Managed Kubernetes Service, including forecasting infrastructure costs and collaborating with accounting on financial planning.
- **Sales & Pricing Strategy**: Worked with Sales and Finance leadership to define a competitive pricing structure for the Kubernetes offering.
- **Cloud-Native & Open Source Advocacy**: Fostered a culture of open-source collaboration, contributing improvements back to the cloud-native community and positioning the company's offerings within CNCF certification programs.

Senior Backend Software Engineer, Adjoe, Hamburg, Germany   01/2019 to 03/2020

- **Backend API Development**: Developed and optimised high-performance GoLang APIs, integrating with AWS services and AWS Athena to support scalable data processing.
- **Cloud Infrastructure & Scalability**: Built cloud-native backend services on AWS, ensuring efficiency and maintainability.
- **Agile Development & Collaboration**: Worked within a fast-paced startup environment, collaborating closely with cross-functional teams to deliver rapid iterations of API features.

Site Reliability Engineer 2, SharePoint Online, Microsoft, Dublin, Ireland   01/2019 to 03/2020

Running Live-Site operations for one of the largest M365 services with over 200 million monthly active users and over 1 exabyte of data, including incident response and management, rapidly diagnosing and resolving

critical issues to maintain SharePoint Online's 99,99% SLA.

- **Disaster Recovery & Infrastructure Modernisation**: Led an initiative to improve disaster recovery playbooks using a more resilient storage solution, ensuring recovery procedures remained accessible even during blackout scenarios.
- **Onboarding & Global Expansion**: Played a key role in onboarding and training a new SRE team in China, enabling 24/7 follow-the-sun operations.
- **Community & Knowledge Sharing**: Organised meet-ups for Microsoft Ireland's Open Source Club

Software Engineer, Network Security, Sophos, Karlsruhe, Germany   01/2017 to 12/2018

- **Network Security & Threat Detection**: Worked on the Synchronised Security Engine, significantly improving network threat detection rates compared to competing vendors.
- **IPSec & Network Protocol Implementation**: Worked on the implementation of IPsec IKEv2 in the Linux Kernel for the Firewall Appliance
- **Scalability & Load Testing**: Implemented extensive firewall load testing using the Ixia BreakingPoint platform, ensuring performance under high traffic loads. Developed custom load-testing frameworks with Python Mininet SDN, simulating concurrent user traffic.
- **Testing & Release Acceleration**: Expanded the integration test suite for firewall products, leading to faster and more reliable release cycles.

Software Engineer, MARKANT Handels and Service GmbH, Germany   08/2015 to 12/2016

- **Infrastructure Modernisation**: Led a department-wide initiative migrating from CVS to Git, upgrading IDE versions, and implementing a CI/CD pipeline for improved development workflows, increasing deployment velocity from once a week to multiple times a day.
- **Operational Support Tooling**: Built custom tools to assist operations teams, enhancing incident response times in highly time-sensitive trading systems.
- **Mentorship & Training**: Trained apprentices and junior engineers in software architecture, clean code principles, and design patterns.

Junior Software Engineer, Streit Datentechnik GmbH, Haslach im Kinzigtal, Germany   09/2012 to 07/2015

- **Software Development**: Learned MS Visual C++, C# .NET, MS T-SQL, MFC, and the Win32 API, broadening problem-solving capabilities across multiple technologies.
- **Reverse Engineering & Analysis**: Developed a disassembler to read dependencies from Windows-PE and C# executables for debugging and system analysis.

Education

Software Engineering, 2015 **|** Gewerblich-Technische Schulen Offenburg, Offenburg im Kinzigtal, Germany
Realschule, 2012 **|** Realschule Schramberg, Schramberg, Germany

Language Proficiencies

German (Native) **|** English (Proficient)

Extra-Curricular Activities

DevOps-Lead Kubernetes rc3.world, Chaos Computer Club   12/2021

Supported the rc3.world backend team as part of the rC3 infrastructure team, overseeing and maintaining a Kubernetes cluster and a complex multi-staged Elixir deployment hosting the remote congress experience.

- **Orchestrated a highly available Elixir Application** using Kubernetes, Kustomize, Helm, ArgoCD, ingress-nginx, cert-manager, and the kube-prometheus-stack.
- **Optimised build & deployment process** by enhancing the Dockerfile layout to use a multi-stage build process, ensuring a smaller and more efficient production image.
- **Built and maintained a multi-stage GitLab CI pipeline** to compile, verify, and deploy documentation for the Elixir application powering the event.

Head of Network, GPN18/19, Entropia e.V.   01/2018 to 06/2019

Led the network infrastructure team of over 15 volunteers with a diverse background for one of the largest CCC events in Germany after the Chaos Communication Congress, acting as the primary representative towards event management, handling sponsor acquisition, multi-homed BGP connectivity, budget management, and logistics for a fault-tolerant network.

Personal Projects

- **Home Lab**: Operate two Kubernetes clusters, one using ClusterAPI in the Cloud and another with K3s on Raspberry Pis, as well as a CEPH storage cluster running on Raspberry Pis, providing a solid testbed for distributed systems research.
- **Deployment & Automation**: Utilise ArgoCD for GitOps-based deployments across Kubernetes clusters as well as Ansible for all other infrastructure and services, enforcing consistency and automation.
- **Observability & Monitoring**: Maintaining a full observability platform running Grafana Mimir, Loki, and Tempo (LGTM Stack) for logging, metrics, and tracing, with outside-in monitoring using NewRelic, ensuring real-time visibility into performance.
- **Networking & Security**: Build and manage a zero-trust home network using Tailscale as a full-mesh VPN, leveraging ACL-based access control for network segmentation and security.
- **IoT & Embedded Systems**: Experiment with LoRaWAN and ESP32-based devices, integrating low-power, long-range communication into home automation and monitoring projects.
- **Open Source Contributions**: Actively contribute to multiple open-source projects

Talks

- Site Reliability Engineering Explained An Exploration of DevOps, Platform Engineering, and SRE
- Understanding Alerting - How to come up with a good enough alerting strategy
- Modern Observability - Scalable Observability with the LGTM Stack: Harnessing the Power of Loki, Grafana, Tempo, and Mimir
- From 0 to Kubernetes Eine Einführung zur Container-Orchestrierung mit praktischen Antworten auf die häufigsten Fragen wie "warum?" oder "wann?"
- Congratulations, it's a Kubernetes! But now what?
- Hilfe, ich bin Manager - und jetzt? Oder auch: Wie man in der IT Karriere machen kann