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# Nikola Kovačević

Engineering Manager | Cloud Platforms & Distributed Systems

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## PROFILE

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Hands-on Engineering Manager with 14+ years building cloud platforms and distributed backend systems. Joined Hetzner Cloud as its third engineer before public launch and later grew backend engineering from 5 to 13 people. Now lead a five-engineer team responsible for authentication, authorization, and billing while continuing to design and ship production systems in Python and Go.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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### Hetzner Cloud GmbH

One of Europe's largest cloud infrastructure providers, operating its own data centers.

#### Team Lead, Identity & Billing

01/2023 – Present

Remote, Germany

- Lead a five-engineer team responsible for authentication, authorization, and billing platforms used across Hetzner Cloud and processing more than 20 million events per day.
- Grew the team from 3 to 5 and own hiring, performance reviews, compensation, headcount budgeting, and quarterly priorities.
- Designed the roles-and-permissions model adopted by other Hetzner products and operate the authorization path for every Hetzner Cloud API call, handling more than 2,000 requests per second.
- Reduced monthly invoice generation from four days to under one hour across more than 10 million line items for hundreds of thousands of customers.
- Integrated billing with SAP for consumption, credits, and invoicing and extended it to additional Hetzner products and pricing models.
- Designed the GDPR deletion service, built a compatibility layer for zero-downtime migration of legacy services, and developed operational tooling for support teams.
- Introduced AI-assisted engineering workflows for multi-repository changes, reducing errors and rework and increasing team efficiency by approximately 30%.

#### Team Lead, Backend Engineering

11/2020 – 12/2022

Remote, Germany

- Grew the backend team from 5 to 13 engineers, redesigned the interview process, and promoted engineers into lead and manager roles as the organization expanded.
- Led the decomposition of the original monolith into event-driven services supporting more than 25 million VPS deployments, cutting API response times to one-third of their previous level.
- Automated customer resource-limit approvals, removing a support bottleneck while preserving abuse controls.
- Created specialist domain teams as the backend group grew, starting with software-defined networking, and transferred roadmap, delivery, and service ownership to new leads.
- Concurrently ran delivery planning across product teams and reported priorities, risks, and progress directly to the CEO.

## Senior Software Developer

11/2016 – 11/2020

Munich, Germany

- Joined a year before public launch as the third engineer on Hetzner Cloud, building the original provisioning and networking systems, account and project management, and public API.
- Built the billing platform in 2017 and remained its primary maintainer as customer and invoice volumes grew, adding early abuse detection to limit exposure from new or unverified accounts.

## 3megawatt GmbH

Renewable-energy SaaS company whose platform managed multi-gigawatt solar portfolios across 15 countries.

## Lead Software Developer

08/2015 – 11/2016

Munich, Germany

- Led a four-person team that designed and launched a data-intensive Python/Django SaaS platform for renewable-asset management in under three months.
- Owned delivery from user requirements through architecture and release, coaching developers through design reviews, code reviews, and technical discussions.
- Operated the AWS-hosted production platform, including deployments, upgrades, and backup and recovery planning.

## Independent Software Consultant

## Backend Developer

01/2012 – 08/2015

Remote

- Delivered Python backend systems and REST APIs for multiple clients, working from requirements and architecture through deployment and ongoing support.
- Built and performance-tuned web applications and database-backed services, resolving bottlenecks in existing production systems.

## TECHNOLOGIES & TOOLS

- **Languages & Frameworks:** Python, Go, FastAPI, Django, Flask
- **Systems & Patterns:** Distributed systems, event-driven processing, inbox/outbox patterns
- **Data & Messaging:** PostgreSQL, Kafka, RabbitMQ, Redis
- **APIs:** gRPC, REST, SOAP
- **Platform & Delivery:** Kubernetes, Docker, GitOps, GitLab CI/CD
- **Observability:** Prometheus, OpenTelemetry, Jaeger

## ADDITIONAL DETAILS

### Languages

German (Fluent), English (Fluent), Serbian (Native)

### Work Authorization

German citizen; unrestricted EU work authorization.