



Case Study:

Cloud landing zone automation for IBMs Nordcloud

nordcloud.com



Executive Summary

Following a series of interviews with IBM, Don from Cloud Pathfinder Services Inc. was referred to Nordcloud to address a highly specialized and time-sensitive need. Nordcloud required immediate expertise to complete the documentation for version 1.0 of a flagship product and to accelerate the development and launch of version 2.0—before a critical team leader departed the company.

Don secured the role after successfully completing Nordcloud's rigorous technical take-home assignment—something no other candidate had managed to do in over six weeks of recruiting efforts.

Background

Nordcloud, a European leader in public cloud transformation services, was acquired by IBM in 2021. The company specializes in cloud strategy, implementation, application development, managed services, and cloud-native training. With a reputation for delivering cutting-edge cloud solutions, Nordcloud serves high-profile clients across industries such as automotive (e.g., Volkswagen and BMW), global retail, aviation, and energy. For a glimpse of their work, see [Nordcloud case studies](#).

Challenge

Nordcloud needed an expert capable of synthesizing over 100 pages of internal engineering documentation related to their v1.x Google Cloud Platform (GCP) Terraform Landing Zone product. The goal was to create clear, concise, and user-friendly public-facing documentation—complete with visual diagrams—to support client adoption and product understanding.

Simultaneously, the team faced a looming deadline: one of the company's pivotal department leads was set to exit in six months. Before his departure, Nordcloud aimed to release version 2.0, a major update introducing a new abstraction layer to support scalable, DRY (Don't Repeat Yourself) architecture across all enterprise customers. This demanded a deep understanding of cloud-native principles, strong documentation practices, security, and rapid execution.



Solution

Rather than introducing a wholly new structure, Don began by evaluating the existing public-facing documentation standards used across other Nordcloud products. His goal was to bring consistency to the documentation for the GCP Terraform Landing Zone by aligning it with the established visual and structural norms. This approach ensured familiarity and coherence across product lines.

Beyond documentation, Don also assumed full responsibility for enhancing deployment reliability by designing and implementing CI/CD-based automated error-checking systems. These pipelines were configured to support both internal engineering workflows and client-facing deployment scenarios.

Implementation

To support version 1.0, Don standardized the documentation to follow logical, workflow-based structures consistent with other Nordcloud products. This included the development and launch of a new documentation website that matched the look and feel of Nordcloud's existing product suite, creating a seamless experience for users and stakeholders.

For version 2.0, Don contributed several critical components:

CI/CD Automation: Introduced Golang-based Terratest frameworks to validate infrastructure as code in continuous integration pipelines.

Terraform Abstraction Layer: Delivered key enhancements using Terragrunt to build a reusable, modular architecture that enabled scalable, multi-tenant deployments across enterprise customers.

Results

Thanks to Don's leadership and technical contributions, version 2.0 of the product was successfully launched just before the departure of a key department head. The public-facing documentation created during this engagement continues to be in active use today, serving both internal teams and external clients.



Client Testimonial

"It's my pleasure to offer my unreserved recommendation for Don Milligan for expertise in Google Cloud Platform (GCP) and services he delivered to Nordcloud, an IBM Company. Don supported the team for 6 months, providing a lot of value with his creative problem-solving, tireless work ethic and flexibility to work with the team regardless of the greatly different time zones..

Don supported us in our Central Landing Zone team, working with our GCP Landing Zone product, improving the processes, documentation and automation. Don was tasked to align GCP team's documentation automation, content and style with the other cloud landing zone products and make sure the content is end-user/customer friendly. Don helped the team to manage to refactor a very complicated Terraform code and repository structure, down to a single well structured, well documented product codebase.

Don is incredibly generous with his flexibility to make working as a team to be efficient regardless of the differences in time zones or geographical locations. Don's transparency and clear and excellent communication skills enable efficient collaboration between team members and potential customers. Don has great understanding on how to set up a good governance model and security in the cloud. He is not afraid to jump into the unknown, which he demonstrated on several occasions when working with completely new technologies, stacks and very complex products."

Mariusz Preiss

Lead of Landing Zones

Nordcloud, an IBM Company



***A full recommendation letter from Mariusz is available upon request.*