

MURENDENI THOVHAKALE

*Specialist Platform Engineer | Enterprise IT Modernization | Azure Arc Migration Lead
2000+ Stakeholder Engagement | Recognized for 300% Improvement in Patch Success Rates*

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Dynamic and results-driven Platform Engineer with over a decade of experience in enterprise IT environments, specializing in Microsoft technologies, cloud architecture, and infrastructure design. Adept in application lifecycle support, DevOps/DevSecOps methodologies, and automation—leveraging AI integration to optimize processes and drive innovation. Recognized with ABSA's 2022 Grand-Prize Kudos Award for outstanding contributions to enterprise patching, compliance, and modernization initiatives. Backed by a robust educational background and certifications including ITIL® v3, 2x Azure, BCNE, 3x MCSA, MCP, and VCA. Passionate about aligning IT operations with business strategy, continuous improvement, and enabling transformation in complex IT ecosystems.

SKILLS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Technical Expertise

- Application design, configuration, and development
- Application support and maintenance
- SharePoint, Office 365 & G-Suite administration
- Windows Server (2012, 2016, 2019, 2022, 2025)
- Linux/Unix & MacOS system administration
- VMware | Hyper-V | OpenStack
- Cloud platforms: Azure, AWS, Google Cloud
- Monitoring & observability: Grafana, New Relic

Security, Automation & Governance

- IT security standards & frameworks: ITIL v3, Agile, ISO
- Vulnerability management & patch governance
- Risk mitigation across applications and infrastructure
- Business continuity planning and compliance
- Password Safe and access management
- PowerShell scripting
- Automation for server management and reporting
- Release management and workload estimation

Leadership & Operations

- DevOps workflows: Jira, Git, Atlassian, Confluence
- ServiceNow & Zendesk
- Documentation, knowledgebase, and reporting
- Technical analysis and solution performance reviews
- Training, mentorship, and user support enablement
- Budget administration and IT procurement
- Cross-functional team leadership and stakeholder engagement
- Continuous improvement and innovation mindset

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- Led ISS Africa's full cloud migration, saving ZAR 1.2M annually.
 - Migrated Digiata from G-Suite to Microsoft 365 and on-prem AD to Entra ID.
 - ABSA 2022 Grand-Prize Kudos Award Winner – selected for an exclusive recognition trip to Mauritius.
 - Currently overseeing the patching strategy for over 8,000 servers at ABSA, continuously improving compliance posture, automation, and risk reduction with a 95% success rate.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ABSA, Randburg, Gauteng - Specialist Platform Engineer

05/2021 - Present

- Currently leading the migration of 8,000+ Windows Servers to Azure Arc at ABSA, aligning infrastructure with cloud-native practices and enabling centralized, scalable server management.
- Designed and led quarterly Patching Refresher sessions for 2,000+ stakeholders, including CIOs.
- Member of ABSA's Patching Council – overseeing risk-based validation and approval of enterprise-wide patches.
- Increased patch success rate from 69% to 95% through automation and process refinement.
- Integrated Broadcom UIM with ServiceNow to improve incident detection and response times.
- Supported over 20 internal and customer-facing apps, including ABSA Rewards.
- Guided disaster recovery simulations and process documentation for mission-critical systems.
- Mentored junior engineers and onboarded new hires for improved team performance.

Digiata, Rosebank, Gauteng - Specialist Platform Engineer

11/2019 – 04/2021

- Migrated on-premise Active Directory to Microsoft Entra ID.
- Transitioned from G-Suite to Microsoft 365, reducing licensing costs by leveraging Microsoft Partner Benefits.
- Performed annual ISO security compliance reviews and supported audit readiness.
- Administered Windows Server, Linux, and Hyper-V environments, improving uptime and efficiency.

- Participated in business continuity planning, disaster recovery testing, and technical auditing.
- Delivered Tier 2/3 support and root cause analysis for business-critical services.
- Architected, configured, and deployed enterprise financial applications for client-facing projects, ensuring scalable and secure infrastructure solutions.
- Helped improve existing support processes and introduced innovative solutions using Zendesk to enhance the client/customer experience, aligned with ITIL standards and supported by thorough documentation.

Institute for Security Studies, Brooklyn, Gauteng - IT Officer

05/2015 – 10/2019

- Led migration from on-premise infrastructure to Microsoft Azure and Microsoft 365, saving ZAR 1.2M annually.
- Created organization-wide DR/BCP strategies and enforced backup policies.
- Managed endpoint security, patch compliance, and internal IT governance.
- Led IT training programs and user adoption initiatives for new systems and services.
- Deployed VPNs, firewalls, and asset tracking systems to support a distributed workforce.
- Delivered technical user-support services and training on internal applications such as email, intranet, etc.
- Reviewed and assessed system architecture, testing, and deployment needs to identify project requirements and costs.
- Implemented and managed wireless devices, multi-site network infrastructure, and business intelligence tools.

Baseline IT, Lynwood, Gauteng - Onsite Technician

07/2014 – 04/2015

- Installed and configured Windows based networks, routers, and office equipment for SME clients.
- Provided Firstline resolution for Microsoft systems, printers, and business continuity issues.
- Improved service levels by providing proactive onsite maintenance and client education.
- Removed malware, ransomware, and other threats from client systems.
- Translated technical terms into simple language for non-technical users.
- Recommended hardware/software changes to improve system performance.
- Followed up with clients to ensure satisfaction post-resolution.
- Delivered onsite training to boost end-user productivity.

Afrihost, Rivonia, Gauteng - Client Services Support

12/2012 – 06/2014

- Supported broadband, hosting, and VoIP clients across multiple digital channels.
- Logged bugs with software teams and contributed to product feedback and QA.
- Wrote and maintained self-help guides and knowledge base content.
- Handled up to 50+ client tickets daily, maintaining high customer satisfaction scores.

Fiberroofing, Kliprivier, Gauteng - Information Technology Administrator (Intern)

01/2011 – 11/2012

- Installed and maintained Wi-Fi infrastructure at student accommodation owned by sister company Buhle Houses, providing connectivity for over 500 students.
- Successfully launched company websites including buhlestudenthouses.co.za, fiberroofing.com, and fiberthatchguide.com.
- Upgraded factory and office networks across multiple business sites, significantly reducing IT costs.
- Introduced new software solutions, trained staff, and improved operational workflows.
- Maintained Linux based servers and coordinated licensing, backups, and security routines.

EDUCATION

Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip): Computer Systems Engineering • Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria
In Progress – Expected Completion: June 2025

Baccalaureus Technologiae (BTECH): Computer Systems Engineering • Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria
Graduated: April 2023

National Diploma (NDIP): Computer Systems Engineering • Vaal University of Technology, Vanderbijlpark
Graduated: April 2015

National Senior Certificate (NSC) • Thohoyandou Technical High, Thohoyandou
Graduated: December 2009

CERTIFICATIONS

- **Certified in Cybersecurity, ISC2** — May 2024
Knowledge: cybersecurity principles, risk management, access control, network security fundamentals
- **Microsoft Certified: Azure AI Fundamentals, Microsoft** — Oct 2023
Knowledge: machine learning, AI concepts, Azure cognitive services
- **Microsoft Certified: Azure Fundamentals, Microsoft** — Aug 2021
Knowledge: Azure cloud concepts, services, workloads, pricing, and support
- **ITIL® Foundation Certificate in IT Service Management, Axelos** — Jul 2018
Knowledge: service lifecycle, IT service management best practices
- **Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate: Web Applications (MCSA), Microsoft** — 26 Sep 2016
Skills: ASP.NET MVC, HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript, Web application architecture
- **Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate: Office 365 (MCSA), Microsoft** — 23 Dec 2014
Skills: Exchange Online, SharePoint Online, Lync Online, Office 365 Administration
- **Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate: Windows Server 2012 (MCSA), Microsoft** — 22 Apr 2014
Skills: Windows Server installation and configuration, Active Directory, networking, Group Policy
- **Microsoft Specialist: Server Virtualization with Hyper-V and System Center, Microsoft** — Apr 2014
Skills: virtualization infrastructure deployment and management
- **Brocade Certified Network Engineer (BCNE)** — Dec 2013
Skills: network design, troubleshooting, and Brocade equipment configuration
- **VMware Certified Associate – Cloud (VCA-C), VMware** — 02 Nov 2013
Skills: Cloud infrastructure concepts, deployment models, virtualization technologies
- **VMware Certified Associate – Datacenter Virtualization (VCA-DV), VMware** — 02 Nov 2013
Skills: Datacenter management, vSphere components, virtualized storage and networking
- **Microsoft Specialist: Programming in HTML5 with JavaScript and CSS3** — Dec 2012
Skills: web development, front-end scripting
- **Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP)** — Dec 2012
Foundation certification acknowledging successful Microsoft exam completions

REFERENCES

Available upon request.