

CHAPTER 7

The Landing Zone

Designing the Foundation for Scale

“Structure follows strategy. If your architecture isn’t built for scale, your business won’t be either.”

The roadmap in the previous chapter promised waves of value. This chapter builds the platform every wave depends on: the landing zone that turns architecture from aspiration into capability.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An Azure Landing Zone is not simply a technical environment.

It is the digital foundation upon which an organisation’s future growth, security and innovation depend.

For Nordic Ventures Group, replacing twelve distributed datacentres requires more than cloud infrastructure. It requires an operating model that is:

- secure,
- standardised,
- scalable,
- compliant,
- and designed for continuous innovation.

The Landing Zone becomes the platform that enables:

- international expansion across fourteen countries,
- optimisation of operations in five factories,
- modernisation of 180 applications,
- integration of SAP, Dynamics 365 and Microsoft 365,
- and realisation of the company’s 25 percent cost reduction target.

Inspired by Gregor Hohpe’s principles in *The Software Architect Elevator*, this chapter demonstrates how

enterprise architects must communicate architecture at every altitude—from the server room to the boardroom.

Why Landing Zones Matter

Most cloud transformations fail because organisations migrate workloads before building a proper foundation.

The result is:

- inconsistent governance,
- uncontrolled spending,
- security gaps,
- duplicated services,
- operational complexity,
- and the recreation of on-premises problems in the cloud.

A Landing Zone prevents these issues by creating a repeatable and governed platform for scale.

The Nordic Ventures Group Challenge

Current State	Future State
12 distributed datacentres	Unified Azure platform
180 applications	Standardised cloud services
140 legacy systems	Modernised application portfolio
Fragmented security	Centralised Zero Trust model
Manual governance	Policy-driven automation
High operational costs	25% cost reduction
Limited scalability	Global expansion platform

The Azure Landing Zone Architecture

The Landing Zone for Nordic Ventures Group consists of six strategic pillars.

1. Identity and Access Management

Identity as the New Security Perimeter

Everything begins with identity.

Microsoft Entra ID becomes the central trust plane for:

- 6,000 users,
- five factories,
- fourteen countries,
- external partners,
- and future acquisitions.

Core Components

- Microsoft Entra ID
- Conditional Access
- Multi-Factor Authentication
- Privileged Identity Management (PIM)
- Identity Governance
- Single Sign-On (SSO)

Business Value

- Improved security posture
- Simplified user experience
- Reduced operational complexity
- Faster onboarding of acquisitions

TRUSTED ADVISOR INSIGHT *This is where inexperienced architects usually fail: they design identity as an afterthought to infrastructure, then spend the next two years retrofitting access control onto a platform that was never built to enforce it.*

2. Governance and Compliance

Digital Guardrails by Design

Governance should never slow innovation.

Governance should enable innovation.

The Landing Zone uses:

- Management Groups
- Azure Policy
- Resource Locks

- Policy as Code
- Deployment Stacks and Infrastructure as Code
- Tagging Standards

This helps ensure that every resource aligns with:

- NIS2
- GDPR
- Corporate Security Policies
- Financial Controls

Business Value

- Reduced compliance risk
- Faster audits
- Standardisation across all countries
- Lower operational costs

3. Network Architecture

Hub-and-Spoke for Global Scale

The network architecture is designed around a global Hub-and-Spoke model.

Central Hub

Provides:

- Shared Services
- Identity Services
- DNS
- Firewall Services
- Connectivity
- Monitoring

Spokes

Contain:

- Factory systems
- Development environments
- SAP workloads
- AI projects
- Regional services

Business Value

- Reduced blast radius

- Improved security
- Faster deployment
- Simplified acquisitions

TRUSTED ADVISOR INSIGHT *Most failed landing zones are not failed on security or cost. They are failed on scale — a topology that works cleanly for three spokes collapses under 30.*

4. Management and Monitoring

Observability at Scale

You cannot secure what you cannot see.

You cannot optimise what you cannot measure.

The Landing Zone therefore includes:

- Azure Monitor
- Log Analytics
- Microsoft Sentinel
- Application Insights
- Service Health
- Cost Management

Business Value

- Faster incident detection
- Lower downtime
- Better decision-making
- Continuous optimisation

5. FinOps and Cost Management

Financial Governance Built In

Cloud costs must be actively managed.

The Landing Zone includes:

- Budgets
- Cost Alerts
- Chargeback Models
- Showback Reporting
- Resource Tagging
- Reservation Management

Business Value

Supports the strategic objective of:

25% cost reduction

TRUSTED ADVISOR INSIGHT *Executives rarely ask what a landing zone contains. They ask what business capability it enables. Keep that answer ready before you present the diagram.*

6. Platform Engineering

From Gatekeeper to Enabler

The Platform Team provides:

- Infrastructure as Code
- Self-Service Capabilities
- Golden Paths
- Reusable Modules
- Automated Deployments

The objective is simple:

Make the right way the easiest way.

The Landing Zone Operating Model

Capability	Business Outcome
Identity	Secure access everywhere
Governance	Compliance by default
Networking	Global scalability
Monitoring	Operational resilience
FinOps	Cost transparency
Platform Engineering	Faster innovation

The Nordic Ventures Group Lesson

The Landing Zone is not infrastructure.

It is the digital foundation for:

- growth,
- resilience,
- innovation,
- security,
- and long-term business value.

Without it, cloud transformation becomes expensive chaos.

With it, the cloud becomes a strategic capability.

Key Takeaways

Principle	What It Means
Build the foundation first.	Never migrate before governance exists.
Identity is everything.	Identity is the new security perimeter.
Governance creates freedom.	Guardrails enable innovation.
Standardisation creates scale.	Complexity is the enemy of growth.
Platform Engineering accelerates delivery.	Self-service increases speed and quality.
Observability is essential.	Visibility enables resilience and optimisation.

Reflection Questions

Would your current cloud platform support a major acquisition tomorrow?

Are your governance controls automated or manual?

Could your organisation operate securely across fourteen countries today?

How quickly can a new application team onboard to your platform?

Is your architecture optimised for growth or merely for migration?

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TRUSTED ADVISOR PRINCIPLE

A landing zone is not infrastructure.

It is an operating model.

Every workload inherits the discipline of the platform it lands on.

Governance built in beats governance bolted on.

Identity is the new perimeter — the foundation decides what the perimeter can even mean.

The Trusted Advisor builds the foundation before making promises about what will stand on it.

Now that the foundation is in place, one question inevitably follows: how do we ensure no one enters who should not, and no one is trusted merely because they arrived?