Modernize on System z while preserving ESCON investments

"The biggest barrier on our infrastructure upgrade path was the high cost and operational impact of replacing our ESCON and Bus/Tag FEPs and the appliactions they serve. Prizm allowed us to upgrade to FICON on the host without having to replace our tried and true devices and applications."

Banks rely on globally integrated SNA networks to provide high quality customer service every hour of every day. For banks of all sizes, the ability to provide consistent, high quality cash withdrawal and other banking related services at their branch ATMs (Automated Teller Machines) and the ATMs of their financial partners is a high priority. However, the cost of maintaining the network and the ATMs to support these services is a long-term investment that requires IT to deal with a challenging set of variables. Software application compatibility, software license fees, hardware upgrade paths, regression testing and back level support are complex and expensive elements to manage.

Today, many banks are providing an excellent customer experience while using proven but mature ESCON and Bus/Tag based FEP systems. These banks appreciate the stability and reliability of these assets and the applications that they serve. However, banks interested in leveraging these mature assets need to construct their mainframe infrastructure in a way that accommodates current and new workload requirements, while simplifying the upgrade of the FEP hardware over time. In addition, retaining this proven, reliable environment requires banks to consider the impact of other mainframe initiatives like the consolidation of mainframe footprints across multiple locations. As the following diagram illustrates, leveraging FICON on System z simplifies the I/O infrastructure and operations today while providing maximum support for new workload requirements in the future.

A wholesale change to this network infrastructure is expensive, complex and risky to manage, so banks need a long term plan to transition smoothly to a more current platform. The ideal plan gives the bank the flexibility to balance timing of infrastructure investments and changes to their application environment.

Banks are implementing Optica's Prizm to eliminate ESCON connections at the host as they plan the transition to the next System z platform. Prizm protects the bank's long term investment in SNA and application stability at a time when headcount and capital expenditures are difficult to manage. As illustrated in the diagrams, a customer eliminating ESCON on the host also gains the flexibility to easily re-organize I/O connectivity or consolidate mainframes to meet the changing needs of their business. European and US banks have already taken this step and found that the investment in FICON channel architecture on System z and Optica's Prizm delivers the operational flexibility and financial freedom to leverage their mature assets and applications today, while they plan for the future.

Diagram A - Original Configuration

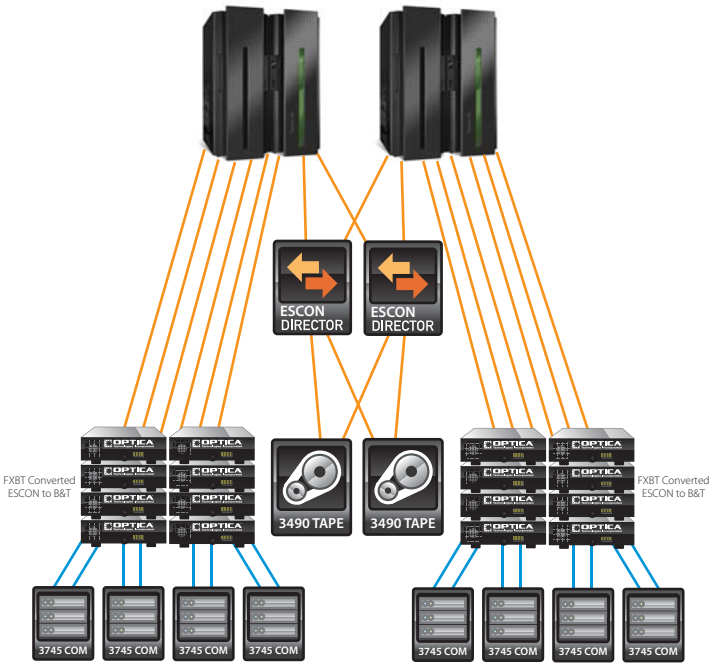

Diagram B - FICON implementation with Prizm