

IT Services Firm Implements Business-critical FICON to SAN

Customer Case Study



Cedacri prepares for converged infrastructure and increasing demand with robust Cisco MDS 9710 FICON implementation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name:

Cedacri S.p.A.

Location: Parma, Italy

Employees: 770

Business Challenge:

- Connect new IBM mainframe environment in campus stretched configuration
- Improve backup and storage replication performance
- Simplify management
- Help ensure mission-critical scalability and resilience

Network Solution:

- Cisco MDS 9710 Multilayer Director Switch
- Cisco MDS 9250i Multiservice Fabric Switch
- Cisco Prime Data Center Network Manager

Business Results:

- Gained IBM FICON 16-Gbps connectivity and resiliency
- Achieved end-to-end simplified manageability
- Accommodated growing transaction volume to maximize mainframe investment

Business Challenge

Cedacri S.p.A. is a leading provider of IT and technology services, specializing in outsourced services to financial, industrial, and utility companies in Italy. In the past two years, Cedacri converged its data center and open storage networks to simplify troubleshooting and management. Two main data centers are located 180 km apart, and Cedacri's mainframe environment moves high volumes of data between them over a Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) cloud. Recently, Cedacri decided to replace its mainframe with a new IBM system that required Fibre Connectivity (FICON) to the storage environment and tape library. With more than 30,000 MIPS of processing power and escalating data volumes to support, Cedacri also had to replace the existing SAN switches to achieve the needed high performance, capacity, resiliency, and efficiency.

"As we evaluated potential solutions, we were looking for a system that we could count on for at least 10 years," says Stefano Aramu, head of TLC systems for Cedacri. "We were highly satisfied with the Cisco MDS switches in our open SAN. Why not use Cisco MDS switches in our mainframe environment and keep the infrastructure as easy to manage as possible?"

With that decision, Cedacri deployed Cisco® MDS 9710 Multilayer Director Switches and Cisco MDS 9250i Multiservice Fabric Switches for its FICON interface, scalability, and resiliency. Cedacri became one of the first enterprises to implement FICON connectivity using the Cisco MDS 9710 switch as a mission-critical director.

Network Solution

In the new mainframe environment, redundant Cisco MDS 9710 Multilayer Directors each connect to the IBM mainframe through FICON. The Cisco MDS 9710 is a director-class SAN switch deployed in large-scale data center storage networks. It is designed to deliver uncompromising high availability, security, scalability, and ease of management. It shares the same operating system and management interface



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Stefano Aramu
Head of TLC Systems, Cedacri

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with other Cisco data center switches, such as the Cisco Nexus® Switches used in Cedacri’s network environment and Cisco Catalyst® 6500 Series switches, which connect its mainframe environment to an MPLS cloud.

The Cisco MDS 9710 gives Cedacri multiple connectivity options: high-performance Fibre Channel, FICON, and Fibre Channel over Ethernet (FCoE) connectivity for flexibility and low total cost of ownership. And with up to 24 terabits per second (Tbps) of Fibre Channel system bandwidth and 384 4/8/16-Gbps or 10-Gbps full line-rate autosensing Fibre Channel ports, the Cisco MDS 9710 offers industry-leading scalability.

At Cedacri, the Cisco MDS 9710 switches deliver data traffic to Cisco MDS 9250i Multiservice Fabric Switches through port channel links, which aggregate multiple physical interfaces into one logical interface with higher bandwidth, load balancing, and redundancy. The Cisco MDS 9250i’s compact form factor and advanced capabilities make it a powerful, cost-effective option for multiprotocol connectivity in open systems and mainframe environments. It connects the mainframe storage environment to Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series switches for transporting replicated data over the company’s MPLS cloud to other locations.

The Cedacri team already used Cisco Prime™ Data Center Manager to manage Cisco Nexus switches and Cisco MDS 9500 Series switches in its open SAN environment. Now they manage the new Cisco MDS switches through the same central point of management.

Business Results

“The Cisco 9710 and 9250i switches deliver all the right capabilities for our FICON environment,” says Mr. Aramu. “Our team was already familiar with the systems and could maintain the same management model. And it gives us a flexible foundation for ultimately re-thinking how we can converge our open and mainframe environments.”

Implementing the new Cisco MDS 9710 and MDS 9250i switches was easy for the Cedacri IT team. They were acquainted with the Cisco MDS 9513 Multilayer Directors, so no additional training was needed. The IT team immediately brought the new switches under management with almost no extra effort. The team’s prior experience with Cisco MDS solutions also helped accelerate deployment and return on investment of the new switches.

The Cisco MDS 9710 and 9250i switches also enable Cedacri to maximize the benefits of its new IBM mainframe. With more mainframe performance and 16-Gbps connections to storage, Cedacri can respond to customers faster, reduce transaction time, and support rapidly increasing transaction volumes.

Next Steps

“We expect to eventually combine our mainframe and open SAN environments onto one SAN infrastructure,” says Mr. Aramu. “We now have the foundation in place to do it.”

Cedacri expects that data volumes and performance requirements will continue to increase. It even anticipates having to accommodate SAN switching capacity up to 100 Gbps. But Mr. Aramu isn’t worried. With the Cisco MDS 9710 and MDS 9250i SAN switches, the next 10 years are covered.

PRODUCT LIST

- Cisco MDS 9710 Multilayer Director Switches
- Cisco MDS 9250i Multiservice Fabric Switch
- Cisco Prime Data Center Network Management

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Nexus Switches, visit http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/products/switches/cisco_nexus_family.html.

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