



WISCONSIN COMPANY PUTS MICROCHIPS IN EMPLOYEES TO PAY FOR BREAK ROOM SNACKS

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July 24 (UPI) — A Wisconsin company wants to surgically implant microchips in its employees to make it easier to buy snacks in the break room.

“It’s the next thing that’s inevitably going to happen, and we want to be a part of it,” said Todd Westby, the CEO of River Falls, Wisc.-based Three Square Market, a company that supplies technology for micro markets and company break rooms, according to KSTP.

Westby said the implanted microchip makes it easier for people to pay for items at work. Instead of looking for coins, cash or a credit card, they would only need to place their hand in front of a scanner and electronically pay for their item.

The microchip would have other uses, as well, like serving as an electronic key to open doors and identify the user to login at a computer.

Three Square Market is planning to sell the technology to other companies and has partnered with a Swedish firm, BioHax International, to make the chip, which uses Radio-Frequency Identification to electronically identify stored information and near-field communication, the same type of technology used to pay for items with mobile phone scans.

“We foresee the use of RFID technology to drive everything from making purchases in our office break room market, opening doors, use of copy machines, logging into our office computers, unlocking phones, sharing business cards, storing medical/health information, and used as payment at other RFID terminals,” Westby said in a company statement. “Eventually, this technology will become standardized allowing you to use this as your passport, public transit, all purchasing opportunities, etc.”

Approximately 50 Three Square Market employees have volunteered to have the microchip inserted. Westby said it is not mandatory.

Three Square Market claims to be the first U.S. company to put microchips in its employees. But in Sweden, the technology has been used since at least 2014 and BioHax International has some competition.

Patrick Mesterton, co-founder and chief executive of Epicenter, praises the microchip technology as a way to streamline work and other daily activities.

“You can do airline fares with it, you can also go to your local gym ... so it basically replaces a lot of things you have other communication devices for, whether it be credit cards, or keys, or things like that,” he told the Australian ABC.

But microbiologist Ben Libberton of the Swedish university Karolinska Institute, sees some potential risks.

“Conceptually you could get data about your health, and you could [get] data about your whereabouts, how often you’re working, how long you’re working, if you’re taking toilet breaks and things like that,” he said. “All of that data could conceivably be collected. So then the question is: What happens to it afterwards? What is it used for? Who is going to be using it? Who is going to be seeing it?”