

BUSINESS

A U.S. company offers to implant chips in its employees

By **DAN BEYERS** | The Washington Post

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Would you ask an employee to get a chip implanted in her hand? Sounds invasive and intrusive. But come Aug. 1, one company in Wisconsin will be giving it a try.

Three Square Market — a developer of software used in vending machines — is offering all of its employees the option to get a microchip implanted between the thumb and forefinger. It's quick, painless and the company will even pick up the \$300 fee. And don't worry't here's no GPS tracking capability ... yet.

The company is expecting 50 of its employees to voluntarily sign up for the implants.

The RFID (Radio Frequency ID) chips would allow those employees who volunteer to participate in the program to open doors, pay for purchases, share business cards, store medical information, pay for stuff at other RFID terminals and login to their computers – all with a wave of the hand.

“Eventually, this technology will become standardized allowing you to use this as your passport, public transit, all purchasing opportunities, etc.,” chief executive Todd Westby wrote in a blog post announcing the program, claiming it would be the first of its kind in the United States.

The program also is meant to be a real-life opportunity for Westby's company to test and expand the technology for its own products. “We see this as another payment and identification option that not only can be used in our markets but our other self-checkout and self-service applications that we are now deploying which include convenience stores and fitness centers,” added another company executive.

A Swedish organization named Epicenter began doing the same thing earlier this year and its workers seem to love it. “People ask me; ‘Are you chipped?’ and I say; ‘Yes, why not,’” one Epicenter employee said in this CNBC report from April. “And they all get excited about privacy issues and what that means and so forth. And for me it's just a matter of I like to try new things and just see it as more of an enabler and what that would bring into the future.”

Three Square Market claims it will be the first company in the United States to implant chips in its employees.