

FORTUNE

Something Big Brother Would Love? A Company Will Implant Microchips in Employees

By [BARB DARROW](#) July 24, 2017

In news that may excite or alarm you depending on your views on technology, a Wisconsin company is getting ready to implant microchips in approximately 50 of its employees. The goal of the program, [which Three Square Market claims is the first of its kind in the U.S.](#), is to enable employees to buy snacks from kiosks securely without using a credit card, cash, or smartphone.

[Three Square Market](#), based in River Falls, Wisc., designs modern vending machines—or what it calls “micro markets” that businesses put in employee break rooms or kitchens.

For the chip program, it is working with Biohax International, a Swedish company specializing in “smart biometric sensors.” The embedded chip uses the same sort of near-field communications (NFC) technology that enables people to hold up their phones to a device to make payments. The chips also rely on wireless [RFID \(radio frequency identification\) technology](#) used to track packages in transit.

Three Square Market’s CEO Todd Westby told St. Paul’s [KSTP News](#) that the optional program will let users with implants pay for their snacks by holding their hands up to the sales kiosks.

[Get Data Sheet](#), *Fortune’s daily tech newsletter.*

The oblong chip—about the size of a grain of rice—is implanted between a person’s thumb and forefinger, and costs about \$300. The company says it will pay that fee for each chip.

Data flowing between implant and reader is encrypted, Westby added. They are not GPS-enabled, meaning the chips cannot be used to track people, he underscored, which may come as a relief to those who worry about employee privacy. (Or, maybe not.)

Epicenter, a startup hub in Sweden, started offering microchips to employees earlier this year, according to [The Los Angeles Times](#).

FORTUNE

Something Big Brother Would Love? A Company Will Implant Microchips in Employees

By [BARB DARROW](#) July 24, 2017

In news that may excite or alarm you depending on your views on technology, a Wisconsin company is getting ready to implant microchips in approximately 50 of its employees. The goal of the program, [which Three Square Market claims is the first of its kind in the U.S.](#), is to enable employees to buy snacks from kiosks securely without using a credit card, cash, or smartphone.

[Three Square Market](#), based in River Falls, Wisc., designs modern vending machines—or what it calls “micro markets” that businesses put in employee break rooms or kitchens.

For the chip program, it is working with Biohax International, a Swedish company specializing in “smart biometric sensors.” The embedded chip uses the same sort of near-field communications (NFC) technology that enables people to hold up their phones to a device to make payments. The chips also rely on wireless [RFID \(radio frequency identification\) technology](#) used to track packages in transit.

Three Square Market’s CEO Todd Westby told St. Paul’s [KSTP News](#) that the optional program will let users with implants pay for their snacks by holding their hands up to the sales kiosks.

[Get Data Sheet](#), Fortune’s daily tech newsletter.

The oblong chip—about the size of a grain of rice—is implanted between a person’s thumb and forefinger, and costs about \$300. The company says it will pay that fee for each chip.

Data flowing between implant and reader is encrypted, Westby added. They are not GPS-enabled, meaning the chips cannot be used to track people, he underscored, which may come as a relief to those who worry about employee privacy. (Or, maybe not.)

Epicenter, a startup hub in Sweden, started offering microchips to employees earlier this year, according to [The Los Angeles Times](#).