Pay with Your Microchipped Hand? You Can at This Wisconsin Company.

By MARK MUSSELMAN

Pay with the hand.

Employees at the Wisconsin-based Three Square Market (3SM), which voluntarily to be implanted with RFID (Radio Frequency) ID chips can now do an array of activities with the wave of a hand. The microchip allows implanted employees to log-in to their computer, open doors, access medical information, and pay for purchases. The company, which develops software for vending machines, said, "Of its 65 employees, at least 25 want to wear implantable chips at the 'chip party'."

According to the company, this is the first time a United States company is providing implanted technology to its employees. The initiative by 3SM is being done in partnership with the Verichip company, Rockville.

Opening a door with a microchipped hand. (The photo was taken at the "Chip" Festival in Berlin. Credit: Günter Geyer.)

"Very few are the cases of RFID technology to drive everyday things from making purchases in our office break room market, opening doors, use of copy machines, hopping into our office computer, unlocking phones, starting business cards, storing medical health information, and even paid for the office vending machines. Eventually, this technology will become standardized allowing you to use this in your paycheck, public transit, all purchasing, etc. - 3SM CEO Todd Westby, company press release"

The big question, of course, is whether employees actually want an embedded chip inside of their hand. The promise of convenience and efficiency through technology does not always ensure widespread cultural acceptance and adoption. If that were the case, the workplace would be filled with Google Glass-wearing employees more efficient by not always having to whip out their smartphones.

Get Wired or Get Fired?

While the microchipping at Three Square Market is not required by employees and is completely optional, the process of implanted tech seems to raise one question: Would you wipe out your password? How slippery is the slope from vulnerability to requiring a device on your person? Fears of biometric data theft that's then sold to the highest bidder are just the tip of the iceberg.

"Are you ready to be microchipped?"

3SM hosted a "chip party" on August 1, 2012 to implant the RFID tech in its future-forward employees (that volunteered). No payroll of the party will burden any employees doing "The Chip."