

BUSINESS

Tech Firm Embeds Microchips In Employees, Predicts We'll All Have One

Paying for purchases with the wave of a hand? That's now reality.

© 07/25/2017 14:08 EDT | Updated 07/26/2017 10:05 EDT

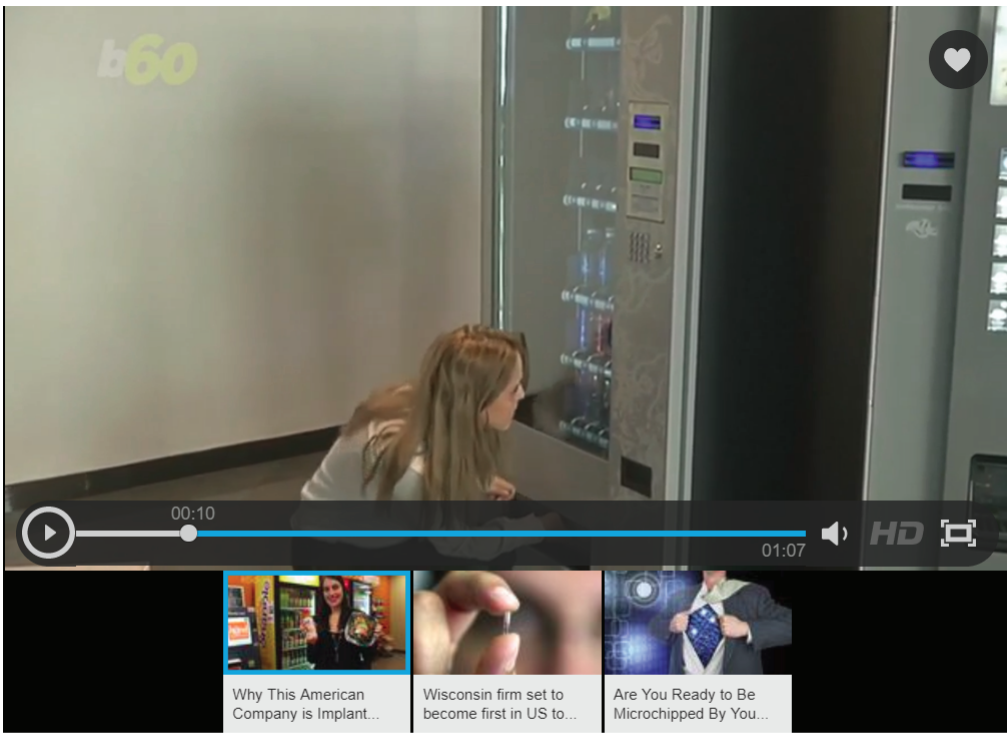


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A Wisconsin-based software company says it is the first in the U.S. to start implanting microchips into its employees, and it predicts that being microchipped will be common in the future.

Three Square Market (32M), which makes software for self-service kiosks and automated "micro-markets," says its employees will be able to log in to their computers, open doors, use copy machines and even pay for purchases in the company break room using the microchips installed under their skin.

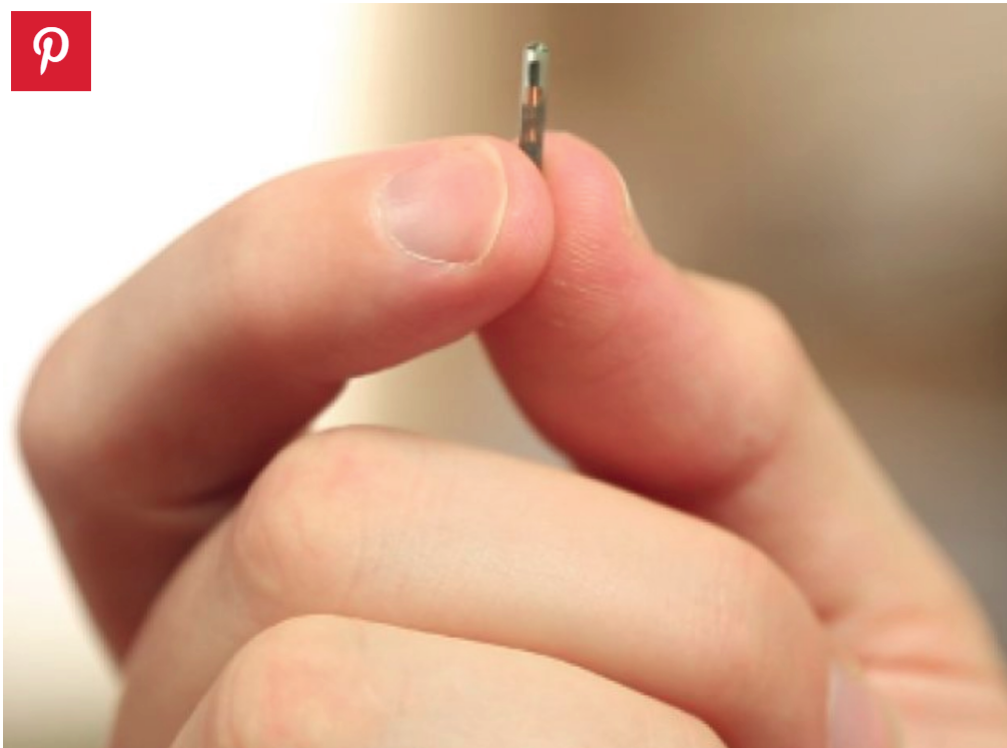
"Eventually, this technology will become standardized allowing you to use this as your passport, public transit, all purchasing opportunities, etc." 32M CEO Todd Westby said [in a statement](#).



The US\$300 chip [is installed](#) beneath the skin between the thumb and forefinger, according to BBC News. To access technology or pay for purchases, the chip-wearer just needs to wave their hand close to a chip reader, in much the same way that microchip credit cards work.

Out of a total of 85 employees, 32M expects about 50 to be microchipped when installation begins on August 1, the company told BBC News. The procedure is not mandatory.

The company has largely dismissed concerns about privacy, saying that the chips can't be used to track people.



THREE SQUARE MARKET

A photo of the microchip implant being embedded in employees by 32M.

"There's no GPS tracking [at all](#)," Westby told local news.

As the chip is "passive" technology that just contains data, it can't be hacked, [he asserted](#) on CNBC.

The company has partnered with "body hacker" Jowan Osterlund, the CEO of Swedish firm Biohax, which is developing the chip technology.

Biohax has been implanting microchips into employees at various companies operating at Swedish startup hub Epicenter for several years.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Self-described "body hacker" Jowan Osterlund from Biohax Sweden holds a small microchip implant, similar to those implanted into workers at the Epicenter digital innovation business centre during a party at the co-working space in central Stockholm, Tuesday March 14, 2017. Osterlund is working with Wisconsin-based 32M to embed chips in the company's employees.

The technology has become so popular that workers at the tech hub hold parties for people who've agreed to be implanted.

"The biggest benefit I think is convenience," said Patrick Mesterton, co-founder and CEO of Epicenter.

In an interview with the Associated Press earlier this year, Mesterton demonstrated the technology by waving his hand to open a door.

"It basically replaces a lot of things you have, other communication devices, whether it be credit cards or keys."

For 32M, the goal is to get in on the ground floor of what it sees as a rapidly expanding new industry.

"The international marketplace is wide open and we believe that the future trajectory of total market share is going to be driven by who captures this arena first," company COO Patrick McMullan [said](#) in the statement.

With a file from The Associated Press.