

“ALWAYS THERE”

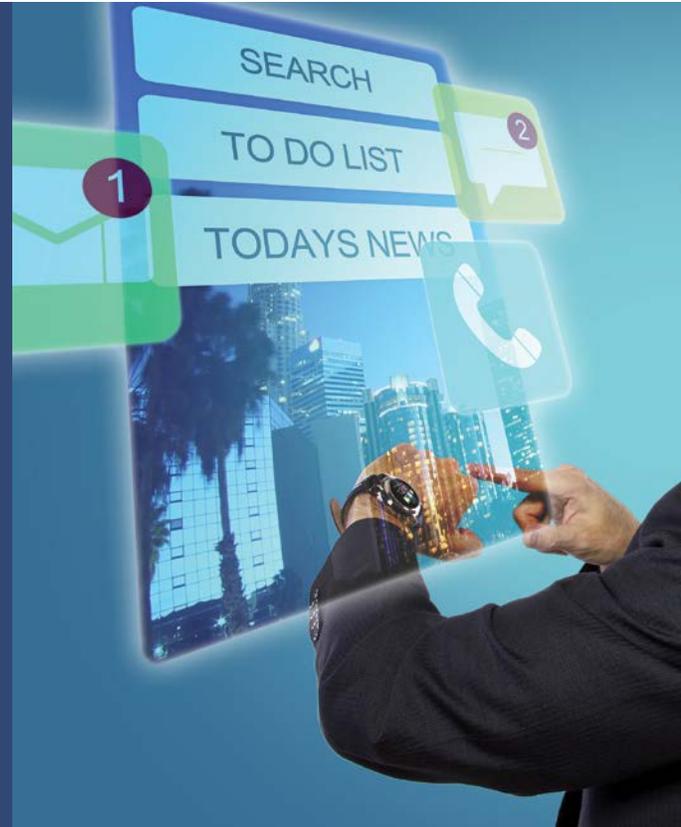
HOW WEARABLE TECH AFFECTS BUSINESS EFFICIENCY

By Mat Herron

You turn on your microwave in your office break room to heat up leftovers, and once the food is cooked, the microwave dings and turns off.

You turn lights on and off in your office depending on the time of day.

You press your index finger on a scanner to clock in for your shift.



Everyday routines like this require completion of a series of mechanical tasks. Over the course of human history, utility companies have built an infrastructure to enable electricity to reach the level where it is ambient: You only use electricity when you need it, but it is always there, waiting for you to flip a switch.

Researchers of wearable tech eventually want the Internet to behave the same way, with the goal of businesses achieving this level of ambience within their operations while increasing workplace efficiency.

Recent studies suggest the benefits of wearables are positive. “The Human Cloud At Work,” a survey done by Goldsmiths, University of London, and cloud software provider Rackspace, followed more than 2,000 employees in the United Kingdom who wore devices that measured posture; sleep patterns and body temperature over several weeks. Both job productivity

and job satisfaction increased at a rate of 8.5 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively.

A 2013 survey by Cornerstone OnDemand showed that more than half of millennials would use wearable technology if it allowed them to perform better on the job.

Coaches of the Buffalo Bills’ professional football team attach devices the size of a matchbox to monitor player performance using gyroscopes accelerometers and magnetometers. That data is collected and used to determine whether a player is overworked and therefore prone to injury, according to an Oct. 2013 story in the Wall Street Journal by H. James Wilson, a senior researcher at Babson Executive Education.

Wearable tech works as a natural extension of mobile devices in two major ways: through the use of smart

glasses and smart watches, says Gurbinder Bali, a director at Oracle USA in Denver working on JD Edwards EnterpriseOne Wearable Technology platforms.

Smart watches, which are strapped to the wrist and less fragile than a tablet, change business processes at a fundamental level, beginning with the way employees interact with their supervisors and one another. Currently, a warehouse supervisor who wants his or her employee to complete a task might have to resort to hollering at an employee who might not hear the task that is being assigned.

Using a smart watch, that supervisor could communicate the same command to his or her employee through a notification that causes the watch to vibrate on the employee's skin, thus gaining the attention needed to complete an

assignment with minimal disruption to workflow. Bali calls this "ease of micro-interaction" a key benefit of wearables. "You can simply flick your wrist and get information, or you can dismiss it."

As well, supervisors can use smart watches to assess key performance indicators like plant production, cost of goods sold and supplier delivery, and machine uptime.

Employees can use voice to text capabilities to display, select and update work orders, as well as show maps and driving directions.

Time tracking, what Bali calls "the holy grail" of wearable technology goals, is made more efficient through the use of proximity-based tracking. Smart watches, working in concert with Bluetooth beacons placed throughout a production facility, allows the employee to

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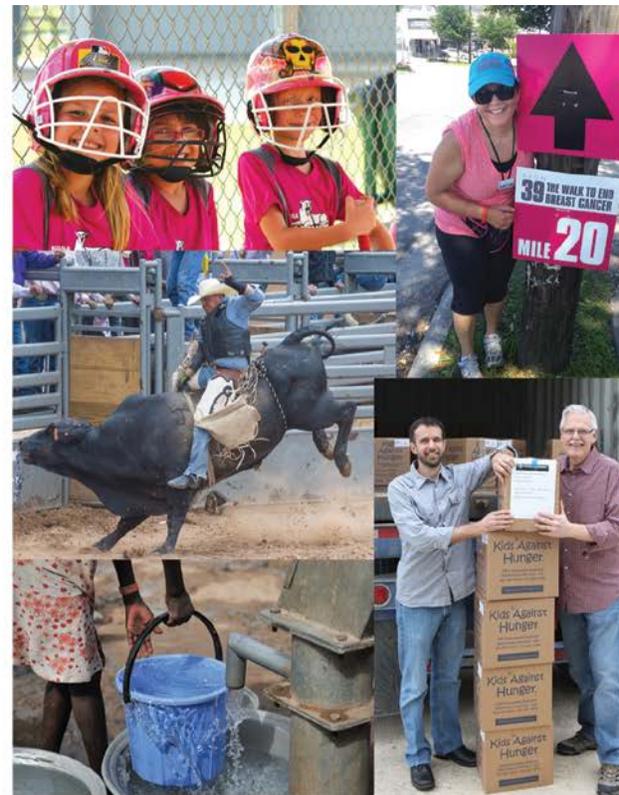
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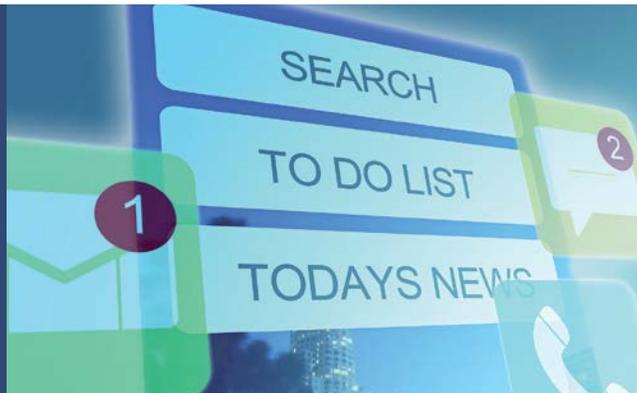
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“ALWAYS THERE” CONTINUED



clock in and clock out automatically as he or she moves through the facility, and notify an employee when it's time for lunch or to take a break.

“Additionally, it has its own Wi-Fi and SIM card and can act independently of the phone to transfer data to Oracle applications.”

Bali says he is encouraged by potential workplace solutions made in developing Samsung's Gear-S Watch and Oracle. “The watch's curved display allows a larger display size and follows the natural contour of the human body,” he says. “Additionally, it has its own Wi-Fi and SIM card and can act independently of the phone to transfer data to Oracle applications.”

Smart glasses with immersive displays present a fascinating opportunity for overcoming workplace obstacles. In warehouses, inventory control, timely order fulfillment and shipment of purchased goods are key to growth and success. Currently, warehouse properties use barcode scanners, which can be dropped and damaged, resulting in a loss of productivity not to mention the cost to replace the device.

Bali says smart glasses will alleviate this problem by taking pictures of a barcode or QR code, then transmitting and archiving that image on a server.

Smart glasses also can come in handy any place where you are required to use augmented information. Firefighters, whose vision is obscured by a smoke-filled house, can download architectural plans to their glasses

to “see” where they are going and hopefully save lives. In its April 2015 whitepaper titled “JD Edwards EnterpriseOne Wearable Technology,” construction workers can use smart glass to view 3-D blueprints to better understand expectations for a completed home. Doctors in remote locations can practice telemedicine, taking advantage of remote guidance from other medical professionals.

Similarly, field technicians and real estate managers can use glasses to call up schematics to quickly find damage inside one of their properties, and find details about what the proper way to fix whatever needs fixing. “With these services, the tech has to take notes,” Bali says. “With wearable smart glass, there can be continuous video recording,” resulting in less post-work activity.

Smart glass does have its limitations: Low processing power means very little video can be recorded, Bali says, and no manufacturer in the United States provides production-ready smart glass.

But the overarching concept hints at a brighter future for enterprise-driven wearable platforms, where employees no longer have to use cumbersome tablets and smartphones onsite, where they no longer walk to their desktop computers. There is no longer tactile manipulation of a handheld device – the technology and the environment blend seamlessly.

“We've been taught to think of computers as idle devices,” Bali says. “In a post-PC world, computers travel with us. We are extending the concept of ‘always on’ Internet to ‘always there’ Internet.”