

Severance

Introduction

Work-life balance has become a serious consideration in the modern economy. Jobs are stressful, demanding, and in the corporate world, often draining. Millions of people clock into work every day mindlessly, toiling away in mazes of cubicles for meager salaries. The system of the modern worklife has been breaking, and its consequences need serious consideration and review. All of this changed when Lumon Industries administered the first Severance surgery.

What is Severance?

Severance is a revolutionary breakthrough in neurological science that allows a subject's memory to 'severed' between two distinct streams of consciousness. A surgery enabled through a small microchip implanted into one's brain, Severance allows a person to completely separate memories from work and memories from personal life. It allows an employee to walk into work and immediately walk out, the time spent in the office completely erased from one's memory. The specialized chip implant prevents either stream of consciousness from ever accessing other memories, and allows a third party to control which is active at a given time. Pioneered and rolled out by Lumon Industries, it has since become a global controversy following its implementation.

Severance procedure is designed to allow employees to maintain company secrets without risk of proprietary information being leaked or mismanaged, while eliminating the need for non-disclosure agreements or other lawyerly mechanisms to maintain company secrets. Severed employees are typically relegated to specified areas of a building or office space to control any interactions with non-severed individuals or even their own selves. Companies are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their severed employees, especially towards their 'innies.' The term 'innies' refers to the stream of consciousness present during work, whereas 'outties' are considered to be the stream of consciousness present beyond work. Severance procedure may not be undone, however upon retirement, the chip is deactivated, eliminating the existence of 'innie' memories permanently.

The benefits of Severance lies within the lives of employees, who are able to obtain paychecks and compensation despite not being conscious or aware of what one's own actions during work are, allowing them instead to enjoy life and ignore the stresses of work completely. Severed employees receive increased compensation from employers and great benefits beyond work. Companies are expected to be responsible for the health, safety, and happiness of all

employees and will take all actions to ensure severed employees, or at least their ‘outties,’ are satisfied with their current working arrangement.

The controversy of Severance lies within the office itself, where ‘innies’ spend hours on end working in an endless loop, being left completely unaware of the circumstances of life beyond the designated company space, and having no personal life of their own. Their activities are closely monitored and regulated, and many suspect companies often subject them to unfair and harsh treatment, covered by the secrecy severed employees provide. An employee’s ‘outie’ is completely unaware of their life within the office, with Severed employees having zero knowledge of what they even do for work, while their innies are refused any share of personal information. What results is a completely unfair system of work where one mind does work in an infinite loop, and another gets to receive the compensation.

History of Lumon

Lumon Industries was founded in the mid-19th century by Kier Egan with the express purpose of advancing human improvement through discipline, order, and productive labor. From its inception, Lumon was conceived not merely as a commercial enterprise but as a civilizational project. Kier Egan articulated a governing philosophy that framed work as a moral force and emotional regulation as a prerequisite for societal progress. Early Lumon operations focused on medicinal products and industrial compounds, but these activities were consistently presented as expressions of a broader ethical mission rather than ends in themselves.

Following Kier Egan’s death, Lumon entered a period of dynastic consolidation under successive generations of Egan leadership. Each generation preserved and expanded Kier’s doctrine, formalizing his writings into a codified belief system that shaped governance, employee conduct, and strategic direction. Over time, Kier’s role evolved from founder to ideological cornerstone, with corporate rituals, instructional texts, and leadership principles explicitly derived from his teachings. During this period, Lumon expanded aggressively across manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, and advanced research, positioning itself as a trusted innovator while maintaining a highly centralized and insulated internal culture.

In the latter half of the 20th century, Lumon’s strategic focus shifted toward neuroscience and cognitive research, reflecting a growing institutional interest in the mechanics of identity, memory, and behavior. These efforts ultimately produced the severance technology, a neurological procedure designed to partition personal and professional consciousness. Externally, severance was introduced as a progressive solution to work-life balance, aligning with Lumon’s longstanding public narrative of human betterment. Internally, the technology enabled unprecedented control over labor environments, allowing Lumon to design workforces optimized for focus, compliance, and continuity without the distractions of personal identity.

Today, Lumon operates as a vertically integrated organization whose influence extends beyond products and services into the structure of human experience itself. Corporate facilities

function as tightly controlled environments governed by established doctrine, hierarchical oversight, and behavioral incentives rooted in Eagan philosophy. Departments are organized around specialized functions whose broader purposes are compartmentalized by design, reinforcing operational security and institutional cohesion. Through this historical trajectory, Lumon has remained consistent in its founding objective: the refinement of humanity through work, order, and the disciplined stewardship of the mind, with the Board of Directors serving as the custodians of Kier Eagan's enduring vision.

Current Controversies

Lumon Industries today operates as a diversified biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and neural-research conglomerate with a global footprint and deep influence across public and private sectors. Its core business lines include medical therapeutics, neurological devices, data-driven cognitive research, and proprietary consciousness-partitioning technologies. While Lumon maintains a public-facing image centered on innovation, wellness, and productivity, much of its operational structure remains deliberately opaque, protected by strict internal compartmentalization and legal secrecy.

Corporate leadership continues to be dominated by the Eagan family, whose members occupy both executive and symbolic roles within the organization. Governance is shaped not only by conventional corporate strategy but also by adherence to the founding principles articulated by Kier Eagan. Senior executives and Board members are expected to function as ideological stewards as much as operational decision-makers, ensuring continuity of doctrine across generations.

Operationally, Lumon's facilities are designed as closed systems emphasizing control, surveillance, and process integrity. Research campuses, manufacturing sites, and administrative centers are governed by strict access protocols and behavioral standards. Departments function with limited cross-visibility, allowing Lumon to pursue highly sensitive projects while minimizing institutional risk. This model has enabled rapid advancement in neural technologies but has also attracted increasing scrutiny from regulators, activists, and former employees.

Exterior Relations

Lumon maintains a complex and often controversial relationship with the United States government, particularly through regulatory agencies, defense-adjacent research initiatives, and public health partnerships. While Lumon positions itself as a compliant and cooperative corporate actor, critics argue that its scale, lobbying influence, and proprietary technologies give it disproportionate leverage over policy formation. Government oversight of severance-related technologies has been described as fragmented, allowing Lumon to operate in regulatory gray zones while continuing large-scale experimentation.

Public perception of Lumon is sharply divided. Supporters view the company as a pioneer in addressing burnout, trauma, and productivity through neurological innovation. Detractors, however, see Lumon as emblematic of unchecked corporate power and ethical overreach. Media investigations and whistleblower testimony have fueled concerns about consent, transparency, and the long-term psychological effects of Lumon's technologies. As awareness grows, Lumon has increased investment in public relations and philanthropic initiatives aimed at reinforcing its narrative of social responsibility.

Opposition groups, most notably the Whole Mind Collective, have emerged as persistent critics of Lumon's practices. These organizations challenge the moral legitimacy of severance and related technologies, framing them as violations of human autonomy and identity. Lumon officially dismisses such groups as misinformed or ideologically driven, yet internal security measures suggest they are treated as credible reputational and operational threats. Tensions between Lumon and these groups continue to escalate, particularly as severance expands beyond limited pilot populations. The Whole Mind Collective since has been mobilizing incredibly vocal support and lobbying efforts against the expansion of Severance across the world, especially popular with younger people.

New Product and Item Development

The core product controversy is Lumon's continued push to expand severance from "workplace partitioning" into more general-purpose applications—using the same underlying capability (selective access to memory/identity states) in contexts that move beyond employment. Lumon's case is that the platform can be therapeutic and socially beneficial; opponents argue that broadening the use-cases multiplies the number of people exposed to irreversible identity risks and creates markets where consent becomes economically or socially coerced rather than freely given.

Finally, Lumon's product roadmap is controversial because it appears designed not just to sell a procedure, but to entrench a new social norm: that identity states can be engineered, scheduled, and managed by institutions. Even without disclosing confidential initiatives, Lumon's public push for normalization, paired with private control protocols, invites a straightforward criticism: the company is commercializing the boundary between selfhood and governance, then reserving the strongest levers of that boundary for itself.

Lumon's Relations With Its Own Employees

Within severed workplaces, the central controversy is management's reliance on restriction-based control: surveillance, controlled movement, limited interpersonal contact, and behavior-shaping "rewards and punishments" that substitute for standard labor norms. The Break

Room model and other coercive compliance practices are widely viewed (by critics and defectors) as punitive conditioning rather than HR policy, raising the question of whether severed employees are being managed or trained. Such practices include the Break Room, which has been the primary disciplining tool for Severed employees. The Break Room operates by making Severed employees repeat statements until they are fully believing those statements. These statements are often demeaning or mentally straining for Severed employees, especially due to how long they may need to be repeated in order to be seen as compliant.

A flashpoint issue is the Overtime Contingency Protocol (OTC), a chip control protocol that can activate a severed worker's "innie" outside the workplace. Even where its intended purpose is framed as contingency response, the mere existence of OTC drives a major labor and civil-rights critique: severance is marketed as a clean boundary, yet OTC proves Lumon can breach that boundary and deploy an "innie" in the outside world without normal, contemporaneous consent from the person living that life. The OTC was activated during the events leading to the Macrodat Uprising, breaching the trust and privacy of severed employees beyond the workspace.

Internally, Lumon also carries an unresolved employee-relations crisis tied to the Macrodat Uprising, an incident that the company has treated as a security and control failure, and which was not publicly disclosed as an "uprising" outside Lumon. The Uprising resulted from four discontent employees from the Macrodata Refinement department, led by their current Department head, Mark S. The internal response has centered on tighter restrictions, revised floor governance, and narrative management aimed at preventing imitation and maintaining institutional authority. In other words: the controversy is not just that resistance occurred, but that Lumon's model predictably manufactures resistance, then responds with more restriction, reinforcing the cycle.

Macrodat Uprising

As briefly mentioned previously, the Macrodat Uprising refers to a security oversight in which four severed employees, all belonging to the Macrodata Refinement department, triggered the OTC Protocol. While an employee by the name of Dylan G. triggered the Protocol through a control panel on the Severed floor, three innies experienced the outside world for the first time, using the opportunity to reveal company secrets and attempt contact with the outies of other severed employees. This incident has sent Lumon into damage control mode as executives try to mitigate the situation.

In the wake of the Uprising, innie employees Dylan G., Irving B., and Helly R. were immediately terminated, and their access to the Severed Floor was revoked. The floor manager under whom the Uprising took place, Harmony Cobel, was also relieved from her position. It

now must be decided what further action Lumon must take to ensure the success of the Severance chip and to continue its operations.

First and foremost, replacements need to be found for the three fired Macrodat employees. While some see this as an opportunity to test the latest models of the Severance chip, others believe that performing the Severance procedure at such a critical and sensitive time would further enrage the public. Instead, some offer more covert methods of filling these roles, either by expanding student fellowships or by bringing in transfers from other branches. These come with their own issues: student interns already report distress caused by negative interactions with employees who believe youth are not competent enough to work on the Severed Floor, and bringing in transfers comes with the headache of convincing their outies that they need to move as well.

Another point of discussion is if and how the Severed Floor needs to change in order to prevent future uprisings. The two competing approaches mainly focus on incentives, and can be seen as the “Iron Fist” or the “Velvet Glove” strategies. Those pushing for an Iron Fist approach argue that employees need to be surveilled even more closely and harshly shamed for subversive actions. They believe that incentives should be rolled back until productivity and contentment improves. On the other hand, Velvet Glove strategists believe that Lumon should play into the Uprising and its goals, and tell severed employees that it was a sweeping success. This would be reflected in an increase in freedom of movement and incentives in order to boost morale. Proponents of both the Iron Fist and Velvet Glove argue that the opposite approach would only inspire further resistance, either by allowing more anger to fester or by creating too many blind spots.

Positions

Seth Milchik - Manager of the Severed Floor

Seth Milchik is one of Lumon's most integral employees. Most recently promoted to a managerial position after the departure of his predecessor, Harmony Cobel, Milchik dutifully manages the Lumon Headquarters Severed floor and its employees. Milchik does his best to cultivate warm relations with all his employees while also setting hard lines of expectations. Milchik's goal is to maintain order and stability on the Severed floor at all costs.

Ms. Casey - Wellness Director

Ms. Casey is the resident wellness coordinator on the Severed floor, providing therapy and wellness services to employees working on the severed floor. Ms. Casey works actively to provide care and support services by booking and arranging 1-on-1 appointments with

employees regularly. Her routine includes providing a safe space for employees to divulge, and providing employees with soothing positive statements about their outies. Ms. Casey seeks to maintain the mental health and wellbeing of all employees at Lumon.

Natalie Kalen - Board Liaison

Natalie Kalen serves as the eyes and ears of Lumon's mysterious board of directors. The board restricts and limits all direct communication and thus, company dealings with the board are often done through intermediaries like Natalie. Natalie also manages many PR and optics initiatives within Lumon, and helps maintain structure and order within the company.

Mark S. - Department Chief of Macrodata Refinement

Mark S. is a severed employee currently serving as the Department Chief for the 4-person MDR team. A longtime Lumon employee, Mark works diligently alongside his colleagues as the newly promoted team lead. While a loyal and capable employee, Mark has grown to question the fairness and ethics of Lumon's entire operation and their treatment of employees. Mark has grown to be a vocal advocate for reform within the workplace. Mark S. has since led the 'Macrodat Uprising' that resulted in several employees breaking protocol and making contact with the outside world. Mark continues to push for better reform within Lumon and fair treatment for employees.

Burt G. - Department Chief of Optics and Design

Burt G. is one of Lumon's longest serving employees. As head of the OD department, Burt's primary role is ensuring that standards of appearance and cleanliness are maintained within Lumon facilities. His department is in charge of the creation and distribution of nearly all office supplies and decor used on the severed floor at Lumon HQ. Burt believes in standing in line with Lumon policy, however is very much open to reforms allowing greater interactions between departments across Lumon's severed workspace.

Lorne C. - Department Chief of Mammalians Nurturable

Lorne manages one of the most mysterious departments within Lumon HQ, Mammalians Nurturable, tasked with the raising and perseverance of goats. Lorne's office is a large synthetic indoor pasture, where her department are completely devoted to the core task of maintaining the livelihood of the goats. Given no specific reasons for the task, Lorne is completely dedicated to taking care of the goats, and places them as her only concern.

Bukayo R. - Department Chief of Choreography and Merriment

Bukayo serves as head of one of Lumon's most unique departments, taking lead of the music and entertainment base of severed floor operations. Bukayo is a skilled instrumentalist and composition writer, providing many of the hymns and tunes core to the Lumon tradition. His department, including a full marching band, are one of the largest forces within the Severed workplace.

Doug Graner - Head of Security on the Severed Floor

Doug Graner is an unsevered employee whose primary focuses revolve around enforcing the safety and integrity of the Severed workplace, both on the Severed Floor and beyond it. These functions included regular monitoring of 'Outies,' preventing interactions between departments by regulating hall passes and monitoring the elevators that give access to the Severed Floor.

Eustice Huang - Wintertide Fellow and Deputy Manager of the Severed Floor

Miss Huang is a member of Lumon's prestigious Winteride Fellowship, accelerating young students' career trajectories into working on core Lumon projects. As a Winterdie Fellow, Miss Huang often must hold employees to strict rules of accountability, and remains quite distant from those around her, primarily due to only being a teen. Miss Huang is incredibly focused on executing Lumon code to its fullest extent.

Harmony Cobel - Outgoing Manager of the Severed Floor

Harmony Cobel is one of Lumon's most tenured and core employees, having served as Manager of the Severed Floor for many years until the Macrodat Uprising. Harmony's work has been crucial to the advancement of the Severance procedure and its implementation, as well as management of the Severed floor for many years. Harmony is refusing to let the consequences of the Macrodat Uprising become the end of her prolific career. As a Lumon fanatic, Harmony is dedicated to securing herself in the company's grand future.

Mr. Drummond - Executive Portfolio Manager

Mr. Drummond is one of the most senior most officials within the company, being tasked with the complete management of Lumon's core assets and functions, he oversees many of Lumon's most secretive projects. Drummond is someone who can come across as very cold, and thus has rather poor relations with the employees that work under him. As a devotee to the cause of Lumon, Drummond lives by every Lumon principle, to the level of a true Lumon cultist.

Dr. Asal Reghabi - Medical Consultant

Dr. Asal Reghabi is a former Lumon medical researcher who helped design and perform the Severance procedure. Dr. Reghabi later left the company over moral considerations over the consequences of Severance procedure. It is rumored that she has been aiding some sort of coordinated effort to end the Severance procedure. Her work also includes researching its possible reversal. Dr. Reghabi seeks strongly to end the usage of Severance procedure across the world

Cecily - Nurse

Cecily is a nurse staffer at Lumon HQ, operating both with administering Severance procedures. She additionally works on secret Lumon projects of the highest degree of importance. Cecily has been seeking to move up from her position as a nurse for a long time, as she receives little pay and support from the company. As a result, she has been trying to better insert herself in all of Lumon's special projects.

Dr. Mauer - Psychologist

Dr. Mauer is a doctor for whom medical ethics are of no concern. Mauer is one of Lumon's chief researchers on human psychology and how it is affected by the Severance procedure. Presently experimenting on the limits of how many times a person can be split, Mauer is known to be someone who appears to be soft hearted but internally is rather cruel.

Ms. Ellerman - Sanitation Official

Ms. Ellerman doesn't just make sure that Lumon is free from litter, but that the waste itself can be transformed into something new. She has begun collecting empty pill bottles, torn medical gowns, broken surgical tools, and discarded severance chips for use in making art. She has been considering leaving the company, as the toll of the highly technological environment at Lumon has been weighing on her conscience.

Mr. Alvarado - Accounting

Every business needs an accountant, and a company as shady as Lumon needs an accountant with a certain moral character. Mr. Alvarado understands the important mission of the severance project, and has been all too willing to adjust financial records to cover for all the "strange" little expenses required for the fulfillment of Kier's vision. Anything to keep shareholders both happy and none the wiser.

Mr. Dooley - Cybersecurity

Lumon takes cybersecurity very seriously, so Mr. Dooley, the head of cybersecurity, takes his job incredibly seriously. He must make sure that work stations, company records, and remote access to the severance chips themselves are under lock and key. Part of this also includes making sure that no messages are passed between innies and outies. One wrong move could be the end of the company, either destroying its reputation or letting company secrets fall into the hands of rivals, making him a silent workhorse that keeps Lumon running.

Helena Eagan - Board Member

Helena Eagan is heir apparent to the Lumon company. A descendant of Kier Eagan himself, and daughter of current CEO Jame Eagan, Helena is as ambitious and eager to lead as every member of the Eagan family before her. Raised by company principles to embody the vision of Kier in every way, Helena has since been a champion of modernizing the company, having spent a long time as a Severed employee just to gain better media coverage. Helena seeks to continue this modernization, hoping to break way from the company's old and strange traditions in favor of a new era approach.

Angelo Arteta - State Senator

Angelo Arteta is a state senator for the town of Kier and its surrounding areas, with Lumon lining his pockets and supporting his quick rise to political fame for a very long time. Arteta continues to lobby for support for Lumon and its initiatives, and continue his trajectory of political power as far as he can. As a State Senator, Angelo has great influence in state and local governments and is hoping to leverage Lumon in order to vie for power in Washington someday.