METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR SELECTING CANDIDATES FOR EMPLOYMENT

The present invention relates to a method and system for selecting candidates for employment, and more particularly relates to a method and system for selecting a prospective candidate to fill a position created by an employer.

When an employer has a vacancy or a position to be filled within their organisation, the employer will typically contact an employment agency or proceed themselves to arrange placing an advertisement in a newspaper or journal in order to solicit prospective candidates for the position. This process of putting an advertisement in the newspaper can take up to five days. After the advertisement is placed in the newspapers, it may take up to two weeks in order to receive replies or suitable responses to the advertisement. This would also include the agencies reviewing resumes of the candidates and possibly developing a short list of potential candidates for interviews by the employer. Then a week or two weeks may follow whereby assessments and interviews are conducted by the employer in order to narrow down their pool of candidates. This could take up to as many as three interviews and include psychological testing of each candidate. Then follows the selection process which can take up to three days to produce the successful candidate for the position. In all, the whole process may take on average a minimum of a month from the time the employer contacts the agency to the successful candidate being offered the position.

Employers are seeking methods for filling a vacancy in a much shorter time. The advantages to be gained are that the companies reduce any lost profit for loss of time by employing a suitable candidate much sooner. The average turn around time of thirty days or so is particularly frustrating for companies that are seeking to replace key personnel at a managerial or executive level. Furthermore, the present method of advertising relies for its success on being attractive to candidates of quality and suitable candidates actually scrutinising the medium in which the advertisements are placed for example, the various newspapers, journals and websites on the Internet.

The present invention provides a method and system for selecting potential employment candidates that is much faster than existing systems and offers immediate and wide exposure of potential candidates to a large number of employers.

Accordingly, the present invention provides a method of selecting prospective candidates for a position of employment with an employer wherein a storage means is provided for storing candidates information of said prospective candidates, said method comprising the steps of:

storing candidate information representative of said candidates;

authorising access by an agent or said employer to said storage means wherein said agent subscribes to said storage means;

whereupon an employer seeking to employ a prospective candidate contacts a subscribing agent to access said storage means or directly accesses said storage means, where the employer is authorised to access said storage means, in order to search said candidate information stored in said storage means for suitable candidates for said position.

The present invention also provides a system of selecting prospective candidates for a position of employment with an employer, said system comprising:

storage means for storing candidate information on prospective candidates;

accessing means for accessing said candidate information;

wherein subscribing agents and subscribing employers are allowed access to said storage means to search said candidate information;

such that an employer seeking to employ a prospective candidate contacts a subscribing agent to search said candidate information stored in said storage means or directly searches said candidate information where the employer is a subscribing employer for prospective candidates suitable for said position.

The present invention further provides a system of selecting prospective candidates for a position of employment with an employer, said system comprising:

storage means for storing candidate information on prospective candidates;

accessing means for accessing said candidate information;

wherein subscribing agents and subscribing employers are allowed access to said storage means to search said candidate information;

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wherein access to said storage means is via a communications network;

such that an employer seeking to employ a prospective candidate contacts a subscribing agent to gain access to and search said candidate information stored in said storage means or said employer directly searches said candidate information where the employer is a subscribing employer for prospective candidates suitable for said position.

The invention will hereinafter be described in a preferred embodiment, by way of example only, with reference to the drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a schematic diagram of a system of selecting candidates in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 2 is a screen used to access various parts of a storage means, such as a database system;

Figure 3a is a screen of the storage means used by prospective candidates;

Figures 3b and 3c are screens of a candidate application form;

Figure 4 is a screen of the storage means used for listing agencies;

Figure 5 is a screen used only by agencies depicting a list of employment categories or groups;

Figure 6 is a screen of the storage means for use only by agencies showing candidates registered on the storage means under a particular group or category.

Figure 7 is a screen of the storage means used only by agencies showing a candidate profile;

Figure 8 is a screen of the storage means used only by agencies showing a request for complete candidate information of particular candidates.

Figure 9(a) is a flow diagram showing the processes involving a candidate registration to the storage means;

Figure 9(b) is a flow diagram showing the processes involving a candidate upon receipt of an authorisation request.

Figure 10 is a flow diagram showing steps undertaken by an agent; and

Figure 11 is a flow diagram showing steps undertaken by an employer.

The following description discusses situations in which an employer or company has requested an agent which, subscribes to a storage means, to search the storage means on their behalf to obtain candidate information of prospective

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candidates in order to fill a position of employment made available by the employer. It is to be understood that the description equally applies as if the employer acts as a subscribing agent whereby the employer, either by itself or through an in-house recruitment department or human resources division, subscribes to the storage means and undertakes itself to search such candidate information and obtain required authorisations to place a prospective candidate in an available position.

In Figure 1 there is shown a system 1 that utilises a communications network, such as the Internet 3 that allows candidates 5 to register their candidate information in a storage means, such as an electronic memory means or database 7, and also allows employers or companies 9 wishing to fill a particular position access to agencies, such as employment or recruitment agencies, who in turn have access to the database 7. A candidate 5 seeking employment accesses, through accessing means, such as their own computer terminal, a website of the operator of the database 7 through the Internet 3 to register their details, complete forms and include a full curriculum vitae which is subsequently stored in the database 7. When an employer or company wishes to obtain a candidate, from a selection of candidates, for a position made available they will upon authorisation, search the database 7 themselves or they will search for an appropriate agent from an agency listing 10 and in particular select an agent that is a member of a group of agents that is allowed to have access to the database 7. This access can either be done directly through the Internet 3 through accessing means, such as a computer, or through a telecommunications network 13.

The appropriately selected agent 15 will have access to a number of candidates which may be deemed suitable for the position on offer based on their qualifications or the industry they are working in or have been working in. Once the agency has a list of prospective candidates, which generally shows a portion of the candidate information for each candidate, they will then transmit that list, either by e-mail or facsimile, through either network 3 or 13, to the company for their approval and typically this will happen on the same day. The company will then contact the agency 15 to request complete candidate information on particular candidates that they wish to interview whereupon the agency 15 will request permission from the database system operator that those candidates provide complete candidate

information on their full details. This will entail the operator to request authorisation from the candidate. Upon authorisation, the details are then transmitted to the requesting company. This then locks the company into a predetermined period of time which will be a maximum of seven days where the candidates may be interviewed a number of times by the company and then a final decision is made by the company on the successful applicant or candidate.

The candidate 10 may also access the database 7 to fill out application forms on their curriculum vitae or other personal details, representing their complete candidate information, and to also make changes to their details through their own computer terminal.

The database system 7, as mentioned previously, will contain details on the prospective candidates and may also contain listings of agencies who are subscribing to the database 7. As mentioned previously, the method of accessing the database 7 is through the internet 3 whereby a web site is set up through the database operator that provides access to the database 7. In Figure 2 there is shown a web page 11 that provides an introduction through box 12 as to what the system is and what it does. The candidates can access the web site free of charge and when they click on button 14 they will be directed to another screen 19 shown in Figure 3a. Candidates or agencies or companies may view agencies that have subscribed to the database 7 by clicking on button 16 and agencies that are subscribing to the system may access "agent only" information by clicking on button 18.

By clicking on button 14, the candidate is directed to the screen 19 shown in Figure 3a. In box 20 they may click on any one of the titles shown. For example, by clicking on "HOW IT WORKS" the candidates will be provided with information on what the system can do for them and how they may receive interviews from certain companies, through a particular agency, that have positions vacant and which match their employment listing, qualifications, etc. They may also fill out an application form 23 by clicking on the second title to which more details are shown in Figures 3b and 3c. Any conditions that apply to them subscribing to the system or filling out an application form is listed under the title," conditions". By clicking on button 22, the candidate may fill out an application form 23 either by entering data directly through a computer terminal or keyboard or by printing out the particular pages and faxing

the details to the database operator through one or both networks 3 and 13. Shown in Figure 3b is a box 24 where the candidate will enter personal details, box 26 where the candidate's previous education and studies are filled in and then in Figure 3c in box 28 if the candidate is a manager or executive, then their particular history may be filled out in this box. Additional information such as places where they have worked, their hobbies, their salary, their references, and any further information may be entered in box 30. Completion of these forms constitutes the full curriculum vitae or complete candidate information of the candidate. Access to the screen of Figure 3c is performed by clicking on the "next" button 27 shown in Figure 3b.

The conditions set by the database operator to be met by each candidate may include that the data supplied by the candidate is as accurate as possible, that the operator reserves the right to monitor and activate the candidate's curriculum vitae into the database 7, a minimum of three referees' details be provided. Furthermore, the conditions may include that the candidate be responsible for reactivating their curriculum vitae within a predetermined period of time (for the curriculum vitae to remain active in the system) and that the candidate notifies the operator when they have been successfully placed in a position by an employer. When this occurs, the candidate simply accesses the website of the operator through the internet 3, or otherwise contacts the operator that they have been placed successfully to enable the operator to transfer their curriculum vitae to an inactive database 17. Reactivation of the curriculum vitae from the inactive database 17 may be requested by the candidate.

Once the conditions are agreed to by the candidate they are then supplied with an identification number or code and PIN (chosen by the candidate) by the operator. Both identification number and PIN are required to access database 7 and inactive database 17, which PIN and identification number remain valid for a period of time, for example, two years.

Where a particular curriculum vitae is current and listed as a record on database 7, the candidate must apply to keep the curriculum vitae active every three weeks, however any other suitable period of time may be enforced by the operator. Reactivation is simply done by contacting the operator and supplying the candidate's identification number and PIN. Failure to reactivate the curriculum vitae within three

weeks automatically entails transfer of the curriculum vitae to the inactive database 17.

Where a candidate has control of disclosure of their complete candidate information, in terms of authorisation given to particular member agents, a small fee is paid to the database operator and, at the discretion of the operator, the candidate may have their information made available for a limited time or until the candidate is placed. An alternative is to allow candidates free subscription to the database 7 but no control over their candidate information, that is, member agents may have access to the complete candidate information with no authorisation from the candidate. Furthermore, paying candidates may have individual access to statistics on the database 7 such as the number of "hits" to their candidate information.

As mentioned previously recruitment or employment agencies may be listed or have websites on the Internet 3 and some or all of those agencies may be members or subscribers to the database 7. For an agency (or employer) to register or subscribe to the database 7 they would contact the database operator either at their website or via e-mail or facsimile and complete a registration form. Once a registration form is completed two levels of passwords and PINs are allocated by the operator to each member agency. The first level is used to access a portion of candidate information or candidate's profiles wherein minimal details of each candidate is provided in cases where that candidate is currently under consideration from another member agency. The second level is used to request complete candidate information or full curriculum vitaes of a particular candidate from the operator. A nominal monthly membership fee of, for example, $250 is payable by each member agency to the database operator and in turn a once off placement fee of a certain percentage, for example 3% of the agent's commission they receive from an employer for placing that candidate. The agent's commission may vary typically between 10% and 25% of the remuneration for one year. Once the registration fee is paid the application for membership is processed by the operator and activated typically within 48 hours.

A list of agencies (and employers) that are subscribing to the system using the database is shown on a screen 32 in Figure 4 accessed by clicking on button 16. Three columns are shown with column 34 identifying the name of the agent, column 36 identifying the agent's location and column 38 identifying any specialties that the

agent deals in for example particular job descriptions or specifications. For employers or companies searching for particular candidates to fill an employment position, they will view the list of agencies in column 34 and select an appropriate agent to deal through, based on any criteria such as location or specialties. By clicking on the selected agent 15, the company will be directed to a web site or further details of the agent, from which the company can contact the agent with a request by fax or e-mail or at the website of the agent.

In Figure 5 there is shown a screen that may be accessed only by agents that subscribe to the system, the screen 40 listing the various industries or categories that best describe a candidate's background or the technology that they have experience in. Specifically, there are buttons 42 that identify, in alphabetical order, the particular categories. The agent may click on any one of these buttons to select a particular technology or industry which will then list the candidates which have identified themselves as being within that category on their application form. Additionally, searching can be performed on the database 7 on candidate's profiles, that is, by industry/technology, specialties, position and/or salary.

If an agency clicks on one of the buttons 42 in Figure 5 they will be directed to a screen 44 shown in Figure 6 which will list candidates numbers in column 46 and along side each candidate it will have the title of the position the candidate is seeking in column 48 and any specialties that they have in column 50. There is a fourth column 52 which identifies whether or not that particular candidate is under consideration. Specifically, there is a series of boxes along side each candidate numbered from 1 to 7 identifying the number of consecutive days that they have been under consideration. For example, in box 54 this particular candidate has been under consideration for three days identified by the three crosses shown in the first three sub-boxes of that box 54. The particular boxes can be activated by a timing means from the time that authorisation from the candidate is received by the database operator. The timing means progressively indicates each elapsed day the candidate's complete candidate information (or curriculum vitae) remains with a particular agent. The next candidate has a corresponding box 56 which is unmarked indicating that that candidate is not being considered by any agency or company at this stage. That candidate's full curriculum vitae details are therefore available should a particular

company or agency be requesting complete candidate information from them. When the seventh day has expired or passed, in for example, the candidate at the bottom of that column 46 which has a corresponding box 58, the company would have made a decision either way for that candidate as to whether they have been successful or unsuccessful in securing the position on offer. Alternatively, if no decision has been made, and an extension of time needed, for example, another seven days, this may then be requested. If that candidate is successful, then the company will pay the agency responsible for liaising with that candidate, a commission which is usually a percentage of one years' remuneration of the successful candidate. Typically the agency can expect to earn 10%-25% of remuneration of one year for that successful candidate. The agency will in turn pay a small fee, say 3%, of the above remuneration to the operators or owners of the database system within a specified time of the candidate being placed. If however, the candidate is unsuccessful and has not been accepted for the position, then they become available again for consideration by other interested companies or employers. It is to be noted that while a candidate is under consideration by a particular company, no other company or agency will be able to access the complete candidate information (full curriculum vitae) of the candidate, as shown in Figures 3 (b) and 3 (c). Such other companies or agencies will, however, have access to minimum data details in box 24, the education studies details in box 26 or the management history or career employment in box 28 of a particular candidate, collectively referred to as a PROFILE of the candidate. The candidate's name is not disclosed in this instance, only the number of the candidate. An example of this is shown in Figure 7 where a particular candidate (number 0000) has been under consideration for three days. This screen 27 in Figure 7 has been accessed by an agent clicking on button 47 in Figure 6. This particular candidate is under consideration and only minimum details, or a portion of the candidate information, is shown in either boxes 24, 26 or 28 so that candidate confidentiality can be maintained while that candidate is liaising with the employer. This, at least, provides a profile about a candidate to another agency. If, on clicking on a candidate number which indicates that in column 52 that candidate is not under consideration, a request for complete candidate information of the candidate may be provided wherein the agency will first of all request the database operator that they are

interested in accessing the details of that particular candidate. The agency will typically use a form shown on screen 60 in Figure 8 where they will type in the particular candidate numbers they are interested in box 62 together with the name of the company or employer that is interested in the candidate identified in box 64 and the agent requesting such full details of the candidate as identified in box 66. The database operator will then contact the particular candidate and inform them of the details of the company, position etc., and seek their authorisation to transmit a full copy of their resume (complete candidate information) to the agent requesting the full details. This process can take up to three days as mentioned previously. After receipt of the request by e-mail or fax, the candidate's authorisation must be forwarded to the database operator and to the requesting agent within three days. Failure to respond within that time will be recorded and transmitted to the relevant agent and employer as "candidate is not interested". If the candidate agrees to transfer his or her details then the seven day countdown will start from that day or the time at which authorisation from the candidate is received or alternatively from the time the candidate information, that is the full curriculum vitae, is transmitted to the employer over networks 3 or 13 or both networks.. The full curriculum vitae is kept confidential to the respective agent and employer and is not transferable to other agencies, branches or affiliate organisations, unless the candidate allows. The curriculum vitae is only to be used by the member agent who filed the request and only for the position specified. The agency in turn will then transmit that complete candidate information to the employer who will then consider the full details or resume and then contact the candidate for either an interview or perhaps a rejection. The employer will be forced to make a decision and conduct the interviews within that seven day period otherwise they will loose control or exclusive hold on that candidate and the candidate will be available for selection by any other company or agency, unless an extension is approved. The agency will of course be contacting the employer within that seven day period at regular intervals to make sure that the company is attending to the selection process and interviews promptly as it is in the agent's interest to secure a successful candidate in the particular position offered. All unsuccessful candidates will have their complete candidate information destroyed by the respective employer and subscribing agent.

Should more time be needed for a decision to be made, a further request must be sent to the candidate under consideration through the operator by the respective member agent, to authorise such an extension. Thus must be done within the initial seven day period. If the candidate is agreeable, then the candidate authorises such an extension by contacting the operator who in turn contacts the agent concerned. Such authorisation must be done within the same time period, otherwise the candidate's curriculum vitae will automatically be made available in the database 7. It would be in the agent's interest and the candidate's interest to have such an extension done. Each agent may only request a maximum number of curriculum vitaes, say ten, for each position made available.

The only stage in which the candidate's name is transmitted to the agent is when a successful request for full details of the curriculum vitae or resume (complete candidate information) is made by the agency. At all other times the confidentiality of the candidate is maintained.

Shown in Figure 9(a) and 9(b) are process steps used by prospective candidates. At step 100 a candidate, in order to be admitted to the database 7, accesses and completes a registration form either at the website of the database operator or directly at their offices. This will include their profile and full curriculum vitae. At step 102 the candidate submits to agreeing to various conditions imposed by the database operator and at step 104 they receive from the database operator an identification number and PIN to use to access their records from the database 7. At step 106 their details of their full curriculum vitae (complete candidate information) is registered in the database 7.

A member agency searching for relevant candidates, in response to a position made available by an employer, may make a request for authorisation to release the complete candidate information from a particular candidate. This request is received at step 108 by the candidate who will either authorise the release of their curriculum vitae within three days at step 110 or if no authorisation or no response is made to the respective member agency then the process is stopped at step 112. Where the authorisation is submitted within three days, the curriculum vitae is transmitted to the requesting agent at step 114 and at step 116 a determination is made as to whether the candidate has been placed after the curriculum vitae details are transmitted to the

employer by the requesting agent. If the candidate has been placed the candidate must submit notification at step 118 to the database operator that they have been placed in which case the database operator will transfer their details or their record to inactive database 17 at step 120. If the candidate has not been placed then at step 122 if no additional time has been authorised from the candidate in which to consider their record, then the process moves to step 124. If extra time has been authorised by the candidate for such consideration the process returns to step 116. At step 124 if a predetermined amount of time has expired, whereby the requesting agent has had exclusive use of the candidate's curriculum vitae, then the candidate's curriculum vitae is released and submitted to the database 7 at step 126 for access by any other member agent. If the time has not expired then the process returns to step 116.

In Figure 10 there is shown processes undertaken by employment or recruitment agencies. At step 130 an agent may register with a database operator to be a member such that they are allowed access to the database 7. They then receive passwords and PINs from the database operator to access the database 7 at step 132, the passwords and PINs being used as a two-step process discussed previously. At step 134 the agencies may on request from an employer search for prospective candidates on a number of criteria such as the industry the candidates work in, their specialties, position and/or salary requested. If a prospective candidate interests a member agency then a determination is made at step 136 as to whether that candidate is already under consideration by another member agency in which case if they are the process stops at step 138 and the agency continues their search. If the particular candidate is not under consideration then the member agency may provide details of profiles of particular candidates to the employer which may result in a request for full curriculum vitae details of particular candidates at step 140. In this situation the request will be made through the database operator. If authorisation is not obtained from the candidate to release the full curriculum vitae details (or complete candidate information) at step 142 the process stops at step 144. If authorisation is obtained then the curriculum vitae details are sent to the employer at step 146 by the agency after receipt thereof from the database operator. At step 148 if the candidate is placed in a position by the employer the employer notifies the agent whereafter the agent notifies the database operator that the particular candidate has been placed and

the process stops at step 152. The database operator will transfer the details of that placed candidate to the inactive database 17 as previously described at step 120 in Figure 9(b). If the candidate has not yet been placed then a determination is made at step 154 as to whether a request for extension of time to consider the candidate is needed. If a request is made the process moves to step 156 and if an extension is authorised by the candidate, the process moves to step 148. If the request is not authorised then the process moves to step 158 and if a predetermined period of time, for example seven days, has expired where the agent has had exclusive use of the curriculum vitae records of the candidate, then the process stops at 160. If a request for extension of time is denied by the candidate at step 154, the process again moves to step 158 and if the predetermined period of time has expired, the process again stops at step 160. If at step 158 the time has not expired, the process moves back to step 148.

Shown in Figure 11 there is shown the steps used by an employer when they require a position to be filled. At step 170 a search is conducted, usually on the Internet 3, for recruitment agencies and particularly those that are member agencies to the database 7. This can be done on the basis of location or specialty of a particular agency. Once an agent is selected then at step 172 the particulars of the position are sent to the selected agent in which case the agent conducts their own search for prospective candidates and returns at step 174 a list of suitable candidates, showing a portion of their candidate information. This will usually be a profile of particular candidates which may be obtained free of charge from the database. Any candidates that particularly interest the employer, may initiate a request for full curriculum vitae details at step 176 in which case the selected agent goes through the steps previously mentioned with respect to Figure 10 to obtain full authorisation for transmitting curriculum vitaes of candidates to the employer. Once this occurs then a decision is made by the employer, on the basis of interviews etc., to place the candidate at step 178 to fill the position and the process stops at step 180.

The present invention provides particular benefits to each of the employer, the agency and the candidate. The benefits to the agency is that on joining or subscribing to the database system, there will be a substantial reduction in advertising costs (which in turn is paid by the employer), a fast response to the agencies' needs,

national coverage of available candidates, access to different market segments where candidates as a whole have a wide range of experience in various industries, increased turnover, a relatively small monthly fee that would be payable to the operators of the database (which may be equivalent to the cost of placing a single advertisement in a newspaper).

The benefits to the employer is that they are not paying large fees for advertising costs, they are able to fill a vacancy with a candidate who has the requisite knowledge and skills in a very short period of time which in turn saves the employer associated costs.

Benefits to each of the candidates who use the database system are that confidentiality of their expression of interest in certain positions is maintained, it reduces the need to continually survey newspapers for advertisements where, in certain situations, particularly executives and managers may be looking for months for the right position to be advertised, it provides a fairer exchange of information much earlier, they will have an answer from a particular employer within a short period of time, it potentially exposes their requisite skills to hundreds of agencies who subscribe to the database system, they are provided with free access to the database system and generally have a much faster response to their particular needs.

CLAIMS:

1. A method of selecting prospective candidates for a position of employment with an employer wherein a storage means is provided for storing candidate information of said prospective candidates, said method comprising the steps of:

storing candidate information representative of said candidates;

authorising access by an agent or said employer to said storage means wherein said agent subscribes to said storage means;

whereupon an employer seeking to employ a prospective candidate contacts a subscribing agent to access said storage means or directly accesses said storage means, where the employer is authorised to access said storage means, in order to search said candidate information stored in said storage means for suitable candidates for said position.

2. A method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of making available to said subscribing agents or said employer a portion of said candidate information of prospective candidates without disclosing the identity of each candidate.

3. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein said subscribing agent or said subscribing employer undertakes a request for authorisation from a selected candidate to have access to complete candidate information of said selected candidate.

4. A method according to claim 3 wherein said request is made through an operator or owner of said database.

5. A method according to claim 3 or claim 4 further comprising the step, upon authorisation by said selected candidate of release of said complete candidate information of said selected candidate, of providing exclusive control of said

complete candidate information to the requesting agent or requesting employer for a predetermined period of time such that said complete candidate information is not accessible to any other subscribing agent or another employer for said position during said period of time.

6. A method according to any one of the previous claims further comprising the step of providing an indication to said subscribing agents and subscribing employers on the availability of complete candidate information of a particular prospective candidate.

7. A method according to claim 6 wherein a candidate is unavailable to other agents or employers, the method further comprising the step of providing an indication to said other agents or employers of the time remaining in said predetermined period of time.

8. A method according to claim 6 wherein a particular candidate has an indication that said particular candidate is not liaising with or under the control of a subscribing agent or subscribing employer, the method further comprising the step of making available all of the complete candidate information to one of the subscribing agents or subscribing employers upon authorisation by said particular candidate.

9. A method according to any one of the claims 2 to 8 further comprising the step of said subscribing agent forwarding to a requesting employer, said portion of candidate information where said requesting employer has contacted said subscribing agent to search said storage means.

10. A method according to any one of claims 5 to 8 further comprising the step of said subscribing agent forwarding to a requesting employer, said complete

candidate information where said requesting employer has contacted said subscribing agent to search said storage means.

11. A method according to claim 9 or claim 10 further comprising the step of said employer reaching a decision to place one of the selected candidates in said position.

12. A method according to claim 10 further comprising the step of requesting an extension of time in which to consider placing a selected candidate in said position, where a decision has not been reached by said employer in said predetermined period of time.

13. A method according to claim 12 wherein the request for the extension of time is authorised by the candidate.

14. A system of selecting prospective candidates for a position of employment with an employer, said system comprising:

storage means for storing candidate information on prospective candidates;

accessing means for accessing said candidate information;

wherein subscribing agents and subscribing employers are allowed access to said storage means to search said candidate information;

such that an employer seeking to employ a prospective candidate contacts a subscribing agent to search said candidate information stored in said storage means or directly searches said candidate information where the employer is a subscribing employer for prospective candidates suitable for said position.

15. A system according to claim 14 wherein said storage means stores information on said subscribing agents.

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16. A system according to claim 14 or claim 15 wherein a subscribing agent or a subscribing employer searching said storage means has access to a portion of said candidate information of all candidates, said portion not disclosing the identity of each candidate.

17. A system according to any one of claims 14 to 16 further comprising indication means for indicating to subscribing agents and subscribing employers searching said storage means, the accessibility of complete candidate information of said prospective candidates to said subscribing agents or subscribing employers.

18. A system according to claim 17 wherein where said indication means indicates that a candidate's complete candidate information is available, any subscribing agent or subscribing employer is able to request authorisation from said candidate to obtain access to the complete candidate information.

19. A system according to claim 18 wherein said request is conducted through an operator or owner of said storage means.

20. A system according to claim 18 or claim 19 wherein, upon authorisation of release by the selected candidate of their complete candidate information to a requesting subscribing agent or subscribing employer, said requesting subscribing agent or requesting subscribing employer has exclusive control of said information for a predetermined period of time such that no other agent or employer has access to said complete information for said period of time.

21. A system according to claim 17 wherein when said indication means indicates that complete candidate information of a candidate is not accessible, only the initially authorised subscribing agent or subscribing employer has control of said complete candidate information.

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22. A system according to claim 20 further comprising timing means for indicating the elapsed time of said predetermined period of time that a candidate has been under consideration.

23. A system according to claim 20 wherein the requesting agent transmits said complete candidate information of a selected candidate to the requesting employer, where said requesting employer has contacted said requesting agent to search said storage means.

24. A system according to any one of claims 16 to 22 wherein a subscribing agent transmits to a requesting employer said portion of said candidate information, where said requesting employer has contacted said subscribing agent to search said storage means.

25. A system according to claim 23 whereupon receipt by said requesting employer of said complete candidate information, said requesting employer makes a decision to place said candidate in said position within said predetermined period of time.

26. A system according to claim 25 wherein where a decision has not been reached within said predetermined period of time, a request to said candidate is made to extend the time in which to consider the candidate for said position.

27. A system according to claim 26 wherein said request for extension of time is authorised by said candidate.

28. A system according to any one of claims 14 to 27 wherein said storage means is an electronic memory means, such as a database.

29. A system according to any one of claims 14 to 28 wherein said storage means is accessible through a communications network.

30. A system of selecting prospective candidates for a position of employment with an employer, said system comprising:

storage means for storing candidate information on prospective candidates;

accessing means for accessing said candidate information;

wherein subscribing agents and subscribing employers are allowed access to said storage means to search said candidate information;

wherein access to said storage means is via a communications network;

such that an employer seeking to employ a prospective candidate contacts a subscribing agent to gain access to and search said candidate information stored in said storage means or said employer directly searches said candidate information where the employer is a subscribing employer for prospective candidates suitable for said position.

31. A system according to claim 30 wherein said communications network is the internet.

32. A system according to claim 30 or claim 31 wherein prospective candidates can enter their candidate information and make changes thereto via said communications network upon entry of an identification code.