

REFERRAL RECRUITMENT METHOD AND SYSTEM

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

- 5 This invention relates to referencing networks, and more particularly to a method and system for managing a referencing network, such as employment, matrimonial or dating, real estate, automotive referral systems or the like.

10 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

- Online job advertising over the Internet has been utilized and become very successful in recent years. Many companies advertise their open jobs on the Internet and attract huge numbers of jobseekers who will then apply for the jobs. Jobseekers also register with the jobsites and let the jobseeker's profiles and curriculum vitae (cv)s be searched by
15 employer companies and recruiters.

- However, users, i.e. active jobseekers, often identify weaknesses in the conventional systems. Every active candidate is registered with each jobsite, leading to duplication in searches. Jobseekers apply more than once for the same job. Companies sometimes get
20 too many applications to effectively handle, and not enough are of good quality.

- One of the reasons for this development is that all efforts concentrate on people who actively go out and search for new jobs themselves – so called active jobseekers. But active jobseekers are only a part of the market, as few as 25% of the total as identified by
25 research of jobtonic.com, a UK recruitment website. The remaining 75% are the passive majority, and as they do not actively seek for employment, they are also referred to as “passive jobseekers”, even though they do not seek. Others in the market that could be included as candidates are missed because they are quite happy in their jobs but could be motivated if the right opportunity came their way. These potential candidates are passive
30 jobseekers as candidates. Conventional systems cannot tap into the passive untapped candidates.

- Using conventional systems, companies have recently achieved improved results in recruitment through internal referral programs. In typical internal referral programs, an
35 employee who refers a friend or acquaintance to start working for the same company gets paid for doing so. Through referral programs, companies are able to reach out to the

different target group of the passive jobseekers. This label does not describe them very well, as these people do not seek a job, but "wait to be discovered", as passive jobseekers. However, the conventional systems are limited to current employees and a vast number of potential candidates of passive jobseekers remain untapped.

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Current conventional referral network systems where finder's fees are awarded primarily exist in internal company or entity network system configurations such as intranet environments. In these internal finder's fee systems, a job placement or vacant position is posted on the internal network. A person with authorized access to the internal finder's

10 fee network system then refers a candidate in response to the job placement advertisement, and the person making the reference is rewarded with a finder's fee if the candidate fills the position.

One such system is disclosed in United States Patent Number 6,457,005 where

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Hotjobs.com, Ltd. is the applicant. Other conventional systems include jobstreet.com, jobsdb.com, monster.in, naukri.com, jobsahead.com, and timesjobs.com. Such conventional systems generate revenue from posting fees, which are paid independent from the success of the advertising. Additionally, such conventional systems are designed to reach "active" jobseekers and do not provide a referral incentive scheme of

20 providing rewards or the like to the referrer. Should a referral occur, there are no assurances made to the employer of the referral.

Therefore, there is a need for a referral management system that addresses a problem associated with the conventional systems and taps in on a wider pool of passive

25 candidates for the referral system, such as passive jobseekers in the referral system for finding candidates for a job. This includes the task of managing a network of potential candidates through the referrer.

SUMMARY

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In accordance with an aspect of the invention there is provided a method of referring candidates for a user seeking to have a vacancy to be filled comprising providing a notice of a vacancy to be filled, assigning a notice identification and a payment reward to the notice, and storing the notice in a notice database; accessing the notice from the database and generating a referral in response to the notice of a vacancy by basing the

referral from selecting a candidate within a candidate group to view the vacancy notice, the candidate group selected from the personal network of the referral, assigning a referral identification to the referral; submitting the referral for consideration; and accepting the referral and generating an instruction to notify the payment reward to the referral
5 identification.

In an embodiment, the method further comprises authenticating that the candidate is a member of the personal network of the referrer and the referral system. Where the candidate is not a member of the personal network, the candidate is invited at the
10 invitation of the referrer to become a member of the personal network. Where the candidate is not a member of the referral system, the candidate is invited at the invitation of the referrer to become a member of the referral system. The method may further comprise rating the referrer based on the outcome of the referral. A rating of the user seeking to have the vacancy to be filled based on the outcome of the referral may be
15 obtained. The ratings and statistics of the referrals may be stored. The ratings and statistics may be accessible by the users and participants of the system. The referrer and the candidate may be notified of the status of the candidate submission. The participants of the system may be notified of a change of status of the candidate submission.

20 In accordance with an aspect of the invention there is provided a system of referring candidates for a user seeking to have a vacancy to be filled comprising a notice interface module for processing and providing a notice of a vacancy to be filled, and assigning a notice identification and a payment reward information; a notice database for storing the
25 notice, notice identification and payment reward information; a referrer interface module for accessing the notice from the database and generating a referral in response to the notice of a vacancy by basing the referral from selecting a candidate within a candidate group stored in a candidate database, a referral processing module for assigning a referral identification to the referral; submitting the referral for consideration; and accepting
30 the referral and generating an instruction to notify the payment reward to the referral identification.

In an embodiment, the system may further comprise a candidate authenticating module for authenticating that the candidate is a member of the personal network of the referrer
35 and the referral system. The candidate authenticating module may invite the candidate to become a member of the personal network at the invitation of the referrer if the candidate

is not a member of the personal network of the referrer. The candidate authenticating module may invite the candidate to become a member of the referral network at the invitation of the referrer if the candidate is not a member of the referral system. A rating module may obtain the ratings of the referrer based on the outcome of the referral. The rating module may obtain the ratings the user seeking to have the vacancy to be filled based on the outcome of the referral. The rating module may store the ratings and statistics of the referrals. The ratings and statistics may be accessible by the users and participants of the system. A notifying module may notify the referrer and the candidate of the status of the candidate submission. The participants may be notified of a change of status of the candidate submission.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In order that the present invention may be fully understood and readily put into practical effect, there shall now be described by way of non-limitative example only preferred embodiments of the present invention, the description being with reference to the accompanying illustrative drawings:

FIG. 1 shows a schematic block diagram of a system in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 2A-C shows simplified block diagram of a system in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 3 shows a flow chart of the method steps taken by an employer in an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 4 shows a flow chart of the method steps taken by a referrer in an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 5 shows a flow chart of the method steps taken by a candidate in an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 6 shows a flow chart of the method steps taken by the server processing the system in accordance with an embodiment of the invention; and

FIG. 7-16 show graphical user interface (GUI) for display in the system in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A system and method in a computer interface system for monitoring and managing referrals in a referral recruitment system is described. The tools of social networking are implemented to improve online recruitment by incentive referral in order to produce a

better quality of candidates at a lower price than in traditional recruitment systems. Such an application where a referral is based on a selection of candidates selected from a group of members in a network known to the referrer is described in detail below to illustrate an embodiment of the invention, however it will be appreciated that other
5 embodiments of the invention may be embodied in other applications. For example, a system and method of an embodiment of the invention for defining and processing referrals for other purpose other than employment systems may be configured, such as dating or matrimony referrals, real estate referrals, automotive referrals, or any application where referrals may be made utilizing social network of acquainted people. However, the
10 employment referral system and method according to embodiments of the invention may be used in any human computer interface for any computer system. In the following description, for the purposes of explanation, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. It is apparent to one skilled in the art, however, that the present invention may be practiced without these
15 specific details or with equivalent arrangements. In some instances, well-known structures and devices are shown in block diagram form in order to avoid unnecessarily obscuring the present invention.

Referring to FIG. 1, an exemplary system 10 is shown on which various embodiments of
20 the invention may be implemented. FIG. 1 shows a referral recruitment employment system 10 in accordance with an embodiment of the invention having a referral server 28 with a web server 26 for running the system via network 30. In the system 10 an employer or a user seeking to fill a vacancy posts an advertisement via referral server 26,28 for the vacancy position via a seeker or employer interface 12 onto a database 14
25 connected to a network 30. The seeker workstation 12 may be configured as a typical workstation having memory 52, processor 54, and interface 56 for communicating with the server 26,28 and other workstations via the network 30. The seeker workstation may also have display 58 and input 59 to have information input into the workstation and information displayed for a user to interact with the system 10. It will be appreciated that
30 the other workstations in the system may be configured in a similar manner. A referrer accesses the advertisement via a referrer interface such as referrer workstation 16 that is connected to the network 30, and selects a candidate 20 from a group of candidates 34. The group of candidates may have any number of candidates N 22. The data 36 of the group of candidates 34 is stored in a candidate database 24 that is connected to the
35 network 30. Also, an outside candidate 32 is shown which the referrer may refer prior to the outside candidate 32 registers as a member of the group of candidates. In FIG. 1 the

referrer 16 is shown together with the group of candidates 34 within the social acquainted group 18 indicated by dashed box 18.

FIG. 2A-C show the referral system 10 where the candidate 22 is not a member of either
 5 the referrer's network 18 or the referral system 42 (FIG. 2A); not a member of the
 referrer's network 18, but a member of the referral system 42 (FIG. 2B); and a member of
 both the referrer's network 18 and the referral system 42 (FIG. 2C). A candidate may only
 have access to the referral system through invitation from a referrer, as indicated by arrow
 19 in FIG. 2C. The candidate is not permitted to access, as shown by block 40 in FIG. 2A
 10 and FIG. 2B, the referral system via internet 30 without having registered with the referral
 system and a member of the referrer networker's personal network.

For example, company A is looking for a new Sales Manager. Company A posts an
 advertisement as a job poster, for example for no fee, on the system and sets a first
 15 reward, for example of THB/INR 10.000, for successful referral of a candidate. Of course,
 it will be appreciated that a fee may be required to post an advertisement. This is shown
 in the method 100 shown in the flow chart of FIG. 3, where the employer registers 102
 and posts the advertisement 104 with the details of the vacancy. The referrer receives
 applications 106, and then evaluates the applications 108 by rejecting 110, shortlisting
 20 112, offering 114 the job to the candidate. If accepted 116, the applicant then begins work
 118, and an invoice 120 and payment 122 is generated to invoice the employer and pay
 the referrer for the successful referral. For each outcome of application, the rating 124
 may be updated of the employer, candidate and the referrer. The case is then closed
 126.

25 An internet user may be on the Internet and comes across the job, for example a Sales
 Manager position posted on the website. This is shown in method 150 shown in flow
 chart FIG. 4, where the referrer registers with the system 152 and accesses the database
 154 with the advertisement 156. The user immediately thinks of a friend, who is part of
 30 the user's personal network of friends and may be a good candidate for the job, for
 example the friend currently works in a similar job. The internet user becomes a referrer
 and sends the friend or refers the job, i.e. requests the server send the job vacancy
 posting of the job details to be posted or forwarded to the friend candidate, and asks if the
 friend is interested in applying. The referrer refers the candidate 158. The referrer uses
 35 the system to send a personalized email message to the potential candidate. This email
 message contains the most important facts of the job, together with a message from the

referrer, which asks the potential candidate to visit the website, find out all details of the job and, if interested, apply for the job right there. The candidate needs to become a member of the referrer's network 160,162 and the system 164,166. The candidate applies 168 and receives notification 170. The referrer receives a rating 172.

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The candidate is actually very interested and registers with system 208,210 and the referrer's network 204,206 in a few quick steps – by entering his email address, a self chosen username and a password. This is shown in the method 200 shown in FIG. 5.

After receiving the invitation 202, the candidate is then directed to the job advert which provides him with full details of the job. The candidate provides all necessary details about himself, completes profile 230, including a resume, and applies for the job 220. The application is mailed to the job poster who evaluates the application together with other applications the job poster has received. As the candidate is a very good fit for the job the candidate gets short listed by the job poster, and receives a notification 240. The interviewed and is finally offered a job by company A 250. The referrer is being kept informed of this not only by the candidate on a personal basis, but also through the system which sends update emails of every step of the process.

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Finally, as the candidate is employed and becomes a successful candidate and is made an employee or consultant of company A and has commenced work, the referrer receives the money the referrer has earned as the reward for headhunting the candidate for this job. The reward is remitted by cheque or directly to the bank account of the referrer, of course payment may be made with or without electronic transactions however the system notifies when payment is to be made and may include electronic transaction automatically. Of course it would be appreciated that payment may be made on certain conditions, for example after the employee has successfully ended a probationary period or the like. In an embodiment, after all this is finished, referrer and job poster (company) may evaluate and give each other a rating, as described in more detail below.

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An embodiment of the system benefits the employer/recruiter because the system taps the power of users' personal networks and reaches candidates, including passive candidates may be referred directly to the employer. The system may be configured such that the reward is paid to the referrer upon successful hiring or after probationary period is served or completed. This ensures a high or better quality of applicants by tapping the huge reservoir of people who are not out there actively hunting for a job, fresh candidates will provide a welcome improvement in quality. Also, recruitment costs are kept relatively

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low minimum because rewards to be paid start at a very reasonable BHT/INR 5000 per job and are only paid out if successful. The amount offered as a reward can be much lower than the usual fee a company would have to pay a professional recruiter, which may be for example between $1/12^{\text{th}}$ and $1/4^{\text{th}}$ of the job's annual salary. The new no risk option of advertising jobs is kept to a minimum because job advertisements that promise a reward are free of charge. The reward is paid out only when successful. There is no risk involved in trying this system.

An embodiment of the system benefits the job seeker/networker because the power of a user's personal network is activated and motivated as a minimum of 5000 BHT/INR per successfully referred job. A jobseeker/networker may invite friends to join the personal circle of friends on the system so he can refer interesting jobs to them, refer friends to jobs that fit them, earn a reward of at least 5000 BHT/INR for every successfully referred candidate, and collect valuable ratings through good referrals to earn more trust from companies for future referrals. A rating takes place only after a successful referral has been made. The company that accepted the candidate rates the job the referrer has done, and the referrer rates how the company has acted in the process. In addition, statistics about all referrals (even not successful ones) show how active the referrer has been and what quality his candidates usually have.

The method 250 shown in flow chart of FIG. 6 shows the steps of the method taken in processing the system by the system server 28. The server facilitates the registrations received by users 252, authenticates the network users 254,256,262,264, and posts the ads 258. The resume submission is received 260 and transferred to the employer 266. The server also triggers notifications 268 to the employer, referrer, and the candidate, respectively, as desired, and updates ratings 270 of the employer, referrer and the candidate depending on the final outcome of the application when the case is closed 272. FIG. 1 shows the referral recruitment employment system 10 in accordance with an embodiment of the invention having a referral server 28 with a web server 26 for running the system via network 30. The referral server/web server may have a number of participant interface modules such as a notice interface module for a user seeking something such as to have a vacancy filled to interact with the system and posting a notice and reacting to a candidate submission by rejecting, shortlisting, offering or the like, a referrer interface module for a referrer to interface with the system to view and browse a notice database and refer a notice to a candidate, and a candidate interface module for a candidate to interface and interact with the system to become a member of the referrer's

network and/or referral system and apply to the notice by submitting candidate details, accept or the like. The system may provide modules for browsing and managing the referrer's network of contacts as candidates for browsing of potential candidates in the candidate group in the network and submitting as referrals. Additionally, modules may

5 provide the functionalities discussed such as rating module for rating and statistic functions described of the participants in the system, participant authenticating modules such as for candidate or referrer authentication, payment/invoice module or notifying module for notifying participants of system events such as change of status of candidate submission, payment upon acceptance, communication from referrer to candidate of

10 referral of notice, or the like.

It will be appreciated that the network 30 may comprise of different networks, for example a public network such as Internet or private networks such as local area network (LAN) or the like. In this configuration, the system 10 may be implemented in such that the system

15 allows companies to use the referral system outside their own company intranet system. Also, a website may be provided via a web server 26 for the participants such as referrer and/or the user for accessing the system 10. The web server 26 is shown as residing on the referral server 28, however, in other embodiments it will be appreciated that the web server may reside separate to the referral server and communicate via the network 30.

20 Similarly, the databases 14,24 are shown separately in FIG. 1, however, it will be appreciated that the databases may reside on the referral server 28, or in another configuration. The web server may host a website with job advertisements that specify a finders' fee for each vacancy. A registered user of the website who has a network of members from which to select and refer as a candidate, and the possibility to invite or

25 register more members to the group which is stored on the candidate database 24, selects the candidate for referral and submits the referral to the user seeking a candidate for filling the vacancy. These referencing functions that allow one user to invite another user to look for a job, apply for a job via the internet, and the information functions that keep the participating parties updated about the status of the recruitment process. The

30 participants are informed about the status of the job application. Notices and reminders are sent to the participating parties when there is a change in status of the application, for example, when and if the application was rejected, or the candidate was short listed, invited for an interview, if and when he got offered the job and finally when accepting the job.

With this configuration, the user seeking a candidate receives assurances from the referral because the selected candidate the referrer refers is known to the referrer. This pre-established pre-relationship between the candidate and the referrer provides the user seeking the candidate an assurance element automatically in addition to the mere referral.

5 The assurance "friend" in fact means that the candidate is part of the referrer's "friends network". Therefore every referred candidate is by definition a "friend" of the referrer. Additionally, statistics of the referrer may also be retained to provide a weighting factor is the "rating" of the referrer and his statistics which show the employer if the referrer is a good referral source, i.e. if he provides companies with good candidates. With such

10 configuration, the user that posted the advertisement receives candidates from this system that are referrals with an element of assurances. Additionally, the assurance element of the referral keeps the cost of hiring to companies to a minimum, for example, the cost of hiring usually is between 1 and 3 monthly salaries of the position which is the typical fee to the head hunter or middleman, whereas the minimum reward to be paid out
15 for a successful referral may be substantially less than half of this in any case.

Additionally, the "middlemen" to use the system and find candidates for "difficult to place" jobs, and the reward they have to pay on the system will still be less what they earn from the employer company, so everyone participating in the system makes a profit which is lower than through conventional methods as this method is designed to eliminate a
20 "middleman" of the recruiter. For example, a recruiter typically receives between about 5% to 25% of the annual salary for the position of the successful candidate that is hired. The finder's fee in this system may be set to another amount that may be less than the conventional 5% to 25% recruiters fee. Additionally, the finder's fee, bounty, bonus, reward or the like element is required to be defined. A minimum reward will be specified
25 which is determined by the employer posting the job vacancy when posting a job and may be changed. For example in one embodiment, the reward element may be only raised, and not lowered.

In an embodiment, any person can become registered user and can invite his friends to
30 join his "network" or group of candidates. In this configuration, the group of candidates is a type of "social network" on the internet, where every person invited into the social network is a friend or acquaintance of the person extending the invitation. Additionally, if the referrer, i.e. the "owner" of the social network, has an established social network with a reputation and regarded as trustworthy and his ratings are good, then the candidates
35 will probably be as well. For example, a referrer invites some person to look at a job who

is not yet part of the referrer's network, the candidate automatically becomes part of the network if he chooses to register with the system. Additionally, a referrer will only invite a friend or acquaintance to apply for a job because he simply does not know any other persons. The entire process in this configuration relies on real friendships and
 5 relationships between referrer and the candidate, as the referrer and the referred basically are a "team" that works together to get the job and the finders' fee.

In an embodiment, the group of candidates forms a friend's network and the referral fee provides the incentive to submit strong candidates to fill the vacancy posted by the
 10 employer. As the employer is aware of the candidates and referrers have a pre-established relationship, the employer is inclined to hire the candidate since the candidate is likely to be a good match for the position. Additionally, since the referrals are based on the pre-established relationship between the referrer and the candidate, a trust factor between friends leads to good referrals, communication and reduces attempts to cheat
 15 the system, for example, applicants may cheat the system by submitting multiple applications using multiple identities.

In this system, the finders' fee provides the incentive for the referrers to make the referrals, and motivates the participants to interact in order to fill the job vacancy. The
 20 friends network is necessary to avoid cheating and improve the quality in the process, as otherwise people will refer other people they do not know anything about, thereby clogging up the system and producing results that are not up to the standards.

The system may run on a programmed computer within the system. It will be appreciated that modules within the system may be programmed with any conventional programming
 25 code such as open source software, for example an MySQL database or php.

The employer in the system may be companies or individuals that are seeking employees. Additionally, classified advertising categories where a finders' fee could motivate people to look for something. For example, by advertising, people increase their chances that
 30 someone fitting their wish finds them. By adding the referral element, the chance is multiplied of people who know other people that fit the description are brought into the game. The power of referral lies in people's personal networks. Everyone has a circle of friends and acquaintances, some have real networks of people. With this system it is

possible of making use of people's personal networks to find candidates for interesting jobs.

The payment mechanisms will make payment of rewards possible and are paid out to the referrer once the candidate has finished his probation period in the job position. However, if the referral candidate decides not to inform the referrer about his hiring, the system depends on the honesty of the company. If the referral has not been a real friend of the referrer, then this is a misuse of the system. In the registering process, the referrer may invite friends or acquaintances to the network, and if the referral candidate is successful, the referrer is rewarded such that there is an incentive for the referrer to nominate or refer candidates that are known to the referrer. This element of the system provides authentication screening that translates into good information flow and an

The input information received from the employer is received by the system and stored in a database. The input information includes the vacancy details and the reward element, and is input by the employer via an employer interface with the network. When the input vacancy and reward information. All data necessary to identify a vacant job, for example the industry, the occupation, the location, the required education and experience, the salary, a description of the job, and the like, is entered into the system via a web server and stored in the database. A referrer may access the vacancy and reward information via a web server with a referrer interface. The candidate inputs their candidate information which is the selection of the candidate in the form of name, details, work experience, age, curriculum vitae or resume, and the like, is uploaded to the system. Every user accesses the system from a computer, laptop, PDA, mobile device, phone or the like. A graphical user interface (GUI) may be provided on the interface module of the device connected to the network via the web server. The format of the data may be in different formats. Users access the system via internet browser on users' computer, internet browser accesses the website of the system and registration with the system. Referrer users can see ads stored by the companies' database of vacancies and reward information, and forward the information to the selected candidate or candidates. Additionally, other referrers and employers can see other referrer's and employer's data and information. Users, which may be employers, referrers or candidates are permitted to only change their own respective data. In an embodiment, candidates that are not registered are not permitted to apply for a job directly without a referral, but of course, a

job seeker may apply directly, as a jobseeker without a referral outside of the system, there will be no rating or referral reward since there is no referrer.

The functional components of the system are stored in memory in the server, which may
 5 be a computer or other means, and the users may access the program on a web server via internet browser connected to the network. It will be appreciated that other configurations of the system may be envisaged, such that the program may be stored on each work station in the system, or a combination of stored on some work stations and/or servers. The different segments of the program may be transferred over the network
 10 between different work stations in the system as the program is operated so that each station only temporarily stores that segment of the program which it needs at any particular time, for example the database may be distributed over the internet.

Regarding the structures and functions of the output interfaces, such as an interface to a
 15 the referrer, the candidate, the employer, or to another system such as a another company's website which may be looking and seeking for recruitment may have a separate administrative interface that accesses the system. Additionally, since all data is input and administrated by the users in the system, there is no requirement of administration. However, it will be appreciated that an administrator may be implemented
 20 to administer or process, enter, refine rules, data or commands used in the recruitment process of the system.

FIG. 7-16 show graphical user interface (GUI) for the system in accordance with an embodiment. The GUI 300 of FIG. 7 shows the company employer GUI for management
 25 of candidates. The GUI 310 of FIG. 8 shows the company employer GUI for mail inbox for application submissions. The GUI 320 of FIG. 9 shows the jobseeker's GUI for job listing, and FIG. 10 shows the jobseeker's GUI 330 to view a particular ad. The jobseeker's GUI 340 shown in FIG. 11 is for listing in different views, such as jobs by company view. The jobseeker's GUI also shows buttons to refer the job to a friend, e-mail to a friend, apply for
 30 the job, and add to favorite jobs. As indicated in FIG. 10, the ratings box is shown displaying the successful referrals, total referrals, and total rewards earned. Statistics are also shown, such as applications, referrals, and the like. FIG. 12 shows the jobseeker section GUI 350 to refer a job to a friend. FIG. 13 shows a GUI 360 for a candidate to apply for a job. FIG. 14 shows a job seeker's GUI 370 for managing a network of
 35 contacts. FIG. 15 is a jobseeker's GUI 380 with the name selected of a contact within the network shown in GUI 370 of FIG. 14. FIG. 16 shows a jobseeker's GUI 390 inviting a

person/candidate to join a network. The network may be arranged such that members of a network can see each other's pages, and member friends of a network can exchange message with each other. Members of the network may also introduce or invite their friends to the network. The network system also functions as a management tool for
5 managing the member friends or potential candidates of the network as shown in managing network GUI 370, 380, 390.

The devices and subsystems of the exemplary methods and systems described with respect to the figures may communicate, for example, over a communication network, and
10 may include any suitable servers, workstations, personal computers (PCs), laptop computers, handheld devices, with visual displays and/or monitors, telephones, cellular telephones, wireless devices, PDAs, Internet appliances, set top boxes, modems, other devices, and the like, capable of performing the processes of the disclosed exemplary embodiments. The devices and subsystems, for example, may communicate with each
15 other using any suitable protocol and may be implemented using a general-purpose computer system and the like. One or more interface mechanisms may be employed, for example, including Internet access, telecommunications in any suitable form, such as voice, modem, and the like, wireless communications media, and the like. Accordingly, network 30 may include, for example, wireless communications networks, cellular
20 communications network, Public Switched Telephone Networks (PSTNs), Packet Data Networks (PDNs), the Internet, intranets, hybrid communications networks, combinations thereof, and the like.

It is to be understood that the embodiments, as described with respect to the figures, are
25 for exemplary purposes, as many variations of the specific hardware used to implement the disclosed exemplary embodiments are possible. For example, the functionality of the devices and the subsystems of the embodiments may be implemented via one or more programmed computer system or devices. To implement such variations as well as other variations, a single computer system may be programmed to perform the functions of one
30 or more of the devices and subsystems of the exemplary systems. On the other hand, two or more programmed computer systems or devices may be substituted for any one of the devices and subsystems of the exemplary systems. Accordingly, principles and advantages of distributed processing, such as redundancy, replication, and the like, also may be implemented, as desired, for example, to increase robustness and performance of
35 the exemplary systems described with respect to the figures.

The exemplary systems described with respect to the figures may be used to store information relating to various processes described herein. This information may be stored in one or more memories, such as hard disk, optical disk, magneto-optical disk, RAM, and the like, of the devices and sub-systems of the embodiments. One or more
5 databases of the devices and subsystems may store the information used to implement the exemplary embodiments. The databases may be organized using data structures, such as records, tables, arrays, fields, graphs, trees, lists, and the like, included in one or more memories, such as the memories listed above.

- 10 All or a portion of the exemplary systems described with respect to figures may be conveniently implemented using one or more general-purpose computer systems, microprocessors, digital signal processors, micro-controllers, and the like, programmed according to the teachings of the disclosed exemplary embodiments. Appropriate software may be readily prepared by programmers of ordinary skill based on the
15 teachings of the disclosed exemplary embodiments. In addition, the exemplary systems may be implemented by the preparation of application-specific integrated circuits or by interconnecting an appropriate network of component circuits.

- Whilst there has been described in the foregoing description preferred embodiments of
20 the present invention, it will be understood by those skilled in the technology concerned that many variations or modifications in details of design or construction may be made without departing from the present invention.

CLAIMS:

1. A system of referring candidates for a user seeking to have a vacancy to be filled comprising:

5 a notice interface module for processing and providing a notice of a vacancy to be filled, and assigning a notice identification and a payment reward information;

a notice database for storing the notice, notice identification and payment reward information ;

a referrer interface module for accessing the notice from the database and

10 generating a referral in response to the notice of a vacancy by basing the referral from selecting a candidate within a candidate group stored in a candidate database, a referral processing module for assigning a referral identification to the referral; submitting the referral for consideration; and accepting the referral and generating an instruction to notify the payment reward to the referral identification.

- 15 2. The system of claim 1 further comprising a candidate authenticating module for authenticating that the candidate is a member of the personal network of the referrer and the referral system.

3. The system of claim 2 wherein the candidate authenticating module invites the candidate to become a member of the personal network at the invitation of the
- 20 referrer if the candidate is not a member of the personal network of the referrer.

4. The system of claim 2 or 3 wherein the candidate authenticating module invites the candidate to become a member of the referral network at the invitation of the referrer if the candidate is not a member of the referral system

5. The system of any one of the preceding claims further comprising a rating module
- 25 for rating the referrer based on the outcome of the referral.

6. The system of any one of the preceding claims further comprising a rating module for rating the user seeking to have the vacancy to be filled based on the outcome of the referral.

7. The system of claim 5 or 6 wherein the rating module stores the ratings and
- 30 statistics of the referrals.

8. The system of claim 7 wherein the ratings and statistics are accessible by the users and participants of the system.

9. The system of any one the preceding claims further comprising a notifying module for notifying the referrer and the candidate of the status of the candidate
- 35 submission.

10. The system of claim 9 wherein the participants are notified of a change of status of the candidate submission.

11. A method of referring candidates for a user seeking to have a vacancy to be filled comprising:

5 providing a notice of a vacancy to be filled, assigning a notice identification and a payment reward to the notice, and storing the notice in a notice database;
accessing the notice from the database and generating a referral in response to the notice of a vacancy by basing the referral from selecting a candidate within a candidate group to view the vacancy notice, the candidate group selected from the
10 personal network of the referral, assigning a referral identification to the referral;
submitting the referral for consideration; and accepting the referral and generating an instruction to notify the payment reward to the referral identification.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprises authenticating that the candidate is a member of the personal network of the referrer and the referral system.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein inviting the candidate at the invitation of the
15 referrer to become a member of the personal network if the candidate is not a member of the personal network.

14. The method of claim 12 or 13 wherein inviting the candidate at the invitation of the
20 referrer to become a member of the referral system if the candidate is not a member of the referral system.

15. The method of any one of claims 11-14 further comprises rating the referrer based on the outcome of the referral.

16. The method of any one of claims 11-15 further comprises rating the user seeking to have the vacancy to be filled based on the outcome of the referral.

25 17. The method of claim 15 or 16 further comprises storing the ratings and statistics of the referrals.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein the ratings and statistics are accessible by the users and participants of the system.

30 19. The method of any one claims 11-18 further comprises notifying the referrer and the candidate of the status of the candidate submission.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein notifying the participants of a change of status of the candidate submission.