

DESCRIPTION

[Title of the Invention]

A METHOD OF PREPAYMENT FOR ACCOUNT RECEIVABLE

[Technical Field]

5 The present invention relates to a method of
prepayment for an account receivable, and more particularly,
to a method that a seller receives a payment for an account
receivable which needs to be paid by a buyer to the seller
as costs for sold goods or provided services before the
10 payment due date in advance.

[Background Art]

In the business transactions, when a selling company
delivers goods such as parts or equipment to a buying
company or provides various services to a buying company,
15 costs for provided goods or services are previously paid or
paid as soon as the goods or services are provided.
However, in a large number of business transactions, a
fixed date is specified from a date when the goods or
services are provided and the payment is made when the date
20 arrives.

In most transactions, the selling company which
provides the goods or services does not receive the payment
before delivering the goods or providing the services or as
soon as the goods or services are provided and cannot
25 collect the expense incurred to manufacture the goods and

provide the services until the determined payment due date has arrived. Therefore, the most selling companies that do not have sufficient operating funds experience financial difficulties and in some worse cases, go bankrupt despite
5 good results of business or sales performances.

In the meantime, a buying company issues a tangible token indicating that the payment shall be paid to the selling company after a specific period of time, or generally, makes a payment at a predetermined date without
10 issuing the tangible token. In this case, it is difficult for the selling company to encash the account receivable early by selling the account receivable of the cost for the goods or services provided to the buyer company to a third party or borrowing money from the bank using the account
15 receivable as a collateral before the due date.

Further, when the selling company borrows money from the bank using a tangible token for the account receivable received from the buyer company as a collateral, the selling company cannot borrow the money depending on a
20 credit rating of the buyer company or even though the selling company borrows the money, a high interest may be applied for the borrowing of the money.

Furthermore, it is difficult to judge authenticity of the tangible token for the account receivable issued by the
25 buying company and the judgment is made through a

considerably cumbersome process. Therefore, it is difficult to encash the account receivable early and it takes much time and efforts.

[Disclosure]

5 [Technical Problem]

An object of the present invention is to provide a method of collecting some or all of the money before the payment date which will be paid by a buyer after delivering the goods or providing services to the buyer by a seller.

10 Specifically, the present invention provides a method of allowing a seller to receive the prepayment based on an account receivable which is held by a seller for a buyer even when the buyer does not issue a tangible token for the account receivable or an electronic account receivable.

15 Further, another object of the present invention is to provide a method of allowing a seller to receive the prepayment for an account receivable through electronic information exchange without much time and efforts.

An additional object of the present invention is to
20 provide a method of using a surplus fund held by a buyer for prepayment of an account receivable of a seller to provide a prepayment method which benefits both a buyer and a seller.

[Technical Solution]

25 The above-described technical object of the present

invention is achieved by the present invention regarding a method of prepayment for an account receivable to be paid by a buyer to a seller as costs for sold goods or provided services.

5 A method of prepayment for an account receivable according to the present invention includes:
a seller information storing step of receiving and storing information on a seller from a buyer computer which stores information on an account payable generated when a buyer
10 buys goods or services, by an intermediary computer which is operated for prepayment of an account receivable by an intermediary who intermediates prepayment of the account receivable;

 a prepayment information storing step of storing
15 information on a limit of a total amount to be prepaid to a seller for every buyer, information on a limit of a total amount to be prepaid to every seller, information on a maximum rate to be prepaid for a value of the account receivable, and information on a bank account of a seller
20 who can receive the prepayment, by the intermediary computer;

 a prepayable account receivable information storing step of receiving information on an account payable whose payment date is confirmed among account payables from a
25 buyer computer to store the information as information of a

prepayable account receivable, by the intermediary computer;

5 a prepayment requesting step of accessing the intermediary computer through a seller terminal which is possessed by a seller and is accessible to the intermediary computer to select an account receivable to request prepayment before a payment date among the prepayable account receivables possessed by the seller, determine a prepayment request amount on or below a maximum rate which is prepayable for the selected account receivable, by the seller, and storing information of the selected account receivable and an amount requested for prepayment, by the intermediary computer;

15 an account receivable to be prepaid determining step of comparing the requested amount of prepayment for the account receivable requested for the prepayment by the seller with a limit of a total amount to be prepaid to the seller for the buyer of the account receivable which is requested for the prepayment and a limit of a total amount to be prepaid to the seller, and when the amount is within the limit, determining the account receivable as an account receivable to be prepaid and storing the information together with the requested amount for the prepayment, and when the amount exceeds the limit, transmitting a message indicating an exceeding of limit to the seller terminal;

25

a prepaying step of transmitting information requesting to deposit an amount to be prepaid for the account receivable to a bank account of the seller to a fund provider computer which is operated for the prepayment
5 of the account receivable by the fund provider who makes a prepayment for the account receivable to be prepaid, by the intermediary computer and depositing an amount to be prepaid into the bank account of the seller by the fund provider computer; and

10 a balance depositing step of depositing an amount of a value of the account receivable into a bank account designated by the fund provider at the due date of the prepaid account receivable, by the buyer, and depositing a balance remaining by subtracting an amount prepaid to the
15 buyer and an amount according to a predetermined discount rate from a value of the account receivable into the bank account of the seller, by the fund provider computer,

wherein a limit of a total amount to be prepaid to the seller by each buyer is determined as a limit for a total
20 amount of amount which is prepaid by the fund provider for an account receivable that the fund provider makes a prepayment to the seller but a value of the account receivable is not yet deposited by the buyer, among account receivables for each buyers, and

25 a limit of a total amount to be prepaid to the seller

is determined as a limit for a total amount of amount which is prepaid by the fund provider for an account receivable that the fund provider makes a prepayment to the seller but a value of the account receivable is not yet deposited by
5 the buyer, among account receivables for each seller.

In the method of prepayment for an account receivable according to the present invention, prior to making a prepayment, information on a seller required for prepayment and information on the account receivable to be prepaid are
10 stored in an intermediary computer by exchanging information between a computer or a terminal which is possessed and used by the buyer and the intermediary computer.

Further, information required for the prepayment such
15 as a limit of an amount to be prepaid is input to the intermediary computer by exchanging information between a computer of a fund provider and the intermediary computer.

Each steps of exchanging and storing information are not necessarily sequentially performed in accordance with
20 the order described in the claims, but may be performed separately or simultaneously or by changing the order.

Specifically, not all information is exchanged, determined, and stored through execution of a single step, may be executed simultaneously or alternately according to
25 a predetermined period and may be executed non-periodically

in accordance with a circumstance such as occurrence of a new seller.

For prepayment, the seller may select an account receivable to be prepaid and an amount for requested
5 prepayment and whether the prepayment can be made is automatically determined in accordance with a determination criterion stored in advance in the intermediary computer for the selection.

Further, the making of the prepayment, that is, the
10 payment for the account receivable is performed and notified by exchanging information between the intermediary computer and the fund provider computer.

As described above, according to the configuration and the operation of the present invention, even though the
15 account receivable possessed by the seller is not a tangible token or an electronic form, some or all of the amount for the account receivable may be prepaid.

Further, each step of the prepayment is performed through the information exchange and determining process
20 through a network without direct negotiation between the seller and the fund provider or the buyer or taking an offline procedure so that the main agents involved in the prepayment including the seller do not spend a lot of time for prepayment process.

25 Further, according to the present invention, the

seller may receive the prepayment for the account receivable with funds held by a third party such as financial institutions or funds including banks or funds held by the buyer, without depending on the loan with the account receivable as a collateral, so that the credit of the seller is not lowered.

In the meantime, as an additional configuration of the present invention, in the seller information storing step, the intermediary computer selects a seller who can receive the prepayment in accordance with a criterion predetermined by the buyer or the fund provider from information of the seller received from the buyer computer and transmits a message regarding selection of the seller who can receive the prepayment to a buyer terminal or a fund provider computer, the buyer or the fund provider who checks the message regarding selection of the seller who can receive the prepayment accesses the intermediary computer through the buyer terminal or the fund provider computer to check a list of sellers who can receive the prepayment selected by the intermediary computer and determine or modify the seller who can receive the prepayment, and the intermediary computer stores the selected seller determined or modified by the buyer or the fund provider as information of the seller who can receive the prepayment.

Further, as an additional configuration of the present

invention, in the prepaying step, the fund provider computer deposits an amount obtained by subtracting an amount according to a predetermined discount rate from the requested amount of prepayment to a seller account, and

5 in the balance depositing step, an amount obtained by subtracting the requested amount for prepayment from the value of the account receivable in the seller account.

As an aspect of the present invention, a limit of a total amount prepaid to the seller by each buyer and a
10 limit of a total amount to be prepaid to each seller are determined in accordance with a credit rating of the buyer and a credit rating and a business type of the seller by the fund provider.

In the meantime, a buying company having a large
15 amount of sales or purchase often defers a payment date without immediately paying the transaction amount to the selling companies which provide goods or services, in most transactions.

However, among the buying companies, some companies
20 may have enough cash to immediately at least partially make a payment, except a buying company with a bad financial condition, and deposit the cash in demand deposits of banks or short-term financial instruments of the financial institutions.

25 However, since the buying companies which hold a

predetermined amount of cash cannot immediately make a payment to the selling company, the buying companies take a policy of deferring the payment in the form of an account receivable bond in some transaction and collectively apply
5 the policy to all selling companies.

The buying company deposits the cash which is held without immediately making a payment to the selling company in the financial institutions such as a bank but the interest received for the deposit amount from the bank is
10 very low so that the benefit obtained by the buying company through the deposit amount is very small.

Further, when the buying company wants to immediately or previously make a payment to the selling company in a bad financial condition, in the case of the large size
15 company which has a transaction with many selling companies, it is very difficult to take the policy of immediately or previously making a payment to a specific selling company by thoroughly considering the circumstances of the selling company.

20 The inventors of the present invention considered a method of prepayment for a purchase amount whose payment is deferred, that is, some account receivable of the selling company, in accordance with the financial condition or a cash holding situation, in consideration of the
25 difficulties of the selling company and the circumstance of

the cash operation of the buying company.

Specifically, the inventors of the present invention considered a method of conveniently prepaying the account receivable to a selling company which requests prepayment
5 of the account receivable in accordance with the financial condition without changing the existing policy for the payment of the purchase amount by the buying company.

Further, the inventors of the present invention considered a win-win approach that both the buying company
10 and the selling company can take benefits, in which the selling company is prepaid for the account receivable at a low cost and the buying company efficiently operates the cash rather than depositing the cash in the bank.

The inventors of the present invention considered a
15 method that very conveniently makes the prepayment of the account receivable such that a financial or accounting officer of the buying company utilizes a computer device which is held to manage the purchase of goods or services and data on purchase of the goods or the services recorded
20 in the computer device and exchanges information with the buying company through an information communication network without spending excessive time and effort.

As a result of the consideration as described above, the inventors contrived an additional prepayment method
25 with a fund of the buyer differently from the above

described prepayment method with a fund of a fund provider who is a third party, as a method of prepayment for the account receivable which makes a payment for the account receivable to be paid for the goods or services to the seller by the buyer before the payment due date through an intermediary between the buyer of the goods or services and the seller.

In the method of prepayment for an account receivable with a fund of a buyer, the prepayment method based on the fund of the fund provider as described above is replaced as follows:

in the seller information storing step, in the intermediary computer, a list of sellers, selected by the buyer or selected by the intermediary computer in accordance with a selection criterion of the buyer, to which a buyer fund prepayment program is applied, as an application target of a buyer fund prepayment program that makes a prepayment for the account receivable to the seller with the fund of the buyer deposited in the buyer account, is stored,

in the prepayment requesting step, when a seller to which a buyer fund prepayment program is applied accesses the intermediary computer through the seller terminal, the intermediary computer transmits a message indicating an application target of a buyer fund prepayment program to

the seller terminal,

when the seller accesses the intermediary computer through the seller computer to select an account receivable to which the buyer fund prepayment program is applied, the intermediary computer stores the selected account receivable as information of the account receivable selected as the buyer fund prepayment program application target,

in the account receivable to be prepaid determining step, the intermediary computer compares a value of the account receivable for the account receivable of the buyer fund prepayment program application target selected by the seller with an amount limit of the buyer fund prepayment program set by the buyer by accessing the intermediary computer through the buyer terminal, when the value is within an amount limit of the buyer fund prepayment program, determines the account receivable as an account receivable to be prepaid in accordance with a buyer fund reimbursement program, stores the information of the determined account receivable to be prepaid, and, when the value exceeds the limit, transmits a message indicating that the value exceeds the limit to the buyer computer, and

in the prepaying step, the intermediary computer transmits information requesting to deposit an amount obtained by subtracting an amount according to a

predetermined discount rate from a value of the account
receivable from a buyer's account for the account
receivable to be prepaid in accordance with the buyer fund
prepayment program to a seller's account, to a computer of
5 a bank which operates the buyer's account.

In the prepayment process according to a prepayment
program with the buyer fund, an amount obtained by
subtracting an amount according to a discount rate from the
value of the account receivable is paid in advance so that
10 the balance depositing step is not performed.

However, also in the prepayment method by the fund of
the buyer, only some amount of the value of the account
receivable may be paid according to a predetermined rate or
a rate selected by the seller in the prepaying step and in
15 this case, the balance may be transferred from the bank
account of the buyer to the bank account of the seller at
the due date of the account receivable.

Further, in the present invention, while the step of
making a prepayment by the fund of the fund provider is
20 performed, as one option, the prepayment may be made by the
fund of the buyer.

The fund used for the prepayment of the account
receivable is a surplus fund of the buyer so that when the
buyer does not have a surplus fund, the prepayment method
25 may not be performed. Therefore, when the prepayment

method based on the fund of the fund provider is performed as a basic process and the prepayment method based on the fund of the buyer is performed as an option or a specifically operated payment program, the prepayment method of the present invention may be stably performed.

However, according to a circumstance of the buyer, the prepayment method based on the fund of the buyer may be performed separately from the prepayment method based on the fund of the fund provider.

As one aspect of the prepayment method based on the fund of the buyer, the prepayment method may be configured to further include steps of,

inputting information on a limit of an amount to be prepaid according to the buyer fund prepayment program by accessing the intermediary computer through the buyer computer, by the buyer;

transmitting balance information requesting information requesting balance information of the buyer's bank account to the computer of the bank, by the intermediary computer;

transmitting balance information of the buyer's bank account to the intermediary computer by the computer of the bank; and

transmitting a message requesting to deposit a difference between the balance and the limit to the buyer's

terminal by the intermediary computer, when the balance of the buyer's account is smaller than the limit of the amount prepayable in accordance with the buyer fund prepayment program by comparing the balance information transmitted
5 from the bank computer and the information on the limit of a prepayable amount according to the buyer fund prepayment program.

Further, as an additional feature of the present invention, after the account receivable to be prepaid
10 determining step and before the prepaying step, further includes steps of,

issuing a message notifying the account to be prepaid to the seller terminal for the account receivable to be prepaid, by the intermediary computer; and

15 generating an information on the prepayment request for the account receivable notified as the account receivable to be prepaid, by accessing the intermediary computer through a seller terminal, by the seller,

wherein in the prepaying step, the prepayment is made
20 for an account receivable requested for prepayment in the prepayment requesting step.

[Brief Description of Drawings]

FIG. 1 is a diagram of a network through which a prepayment method according to an exemplary embodiment of
25 the present invention is performed.

FIG. 2 is a flowchart illustrating a step of limit setting by a buying company and a step of determining a selling company which can receive the prepayment in the prepayment method according to the exemplary embodiment.

5 FIG. 3 is a flowchart illustrating a step of subscribing of the selling company in the prepayment method according to the exemplary embodiment.

FIG. 4 is a flowchart illustrating an information storing step of an account receivable in the prepayment
10 method according to the exemplary embodiment.

FIG. 5 is a flowchart illustrating a selecting a prepayment program in a prepayment method according to the exemplary embodiment.

FIG. 6 is a flowchart illustrating a step of
15 requesting the prepayment based on a fund provider's fund, according to the exemplary embodiment.

FIG. 7 is a flowchart illustrating an applying step to a buying company's fund prepayment in the prepayment method according to the exemplary embodiment.

20 [Best Mode]

Hereinafter, exemplary embodiments of a prepayment method according to the present invention will be described with reference to the drawings.

The exemplary embodiment to be described below
25 describes one example which implements the present

invention. However, the present invention is not limited to the embodiments and various changes, modifications, and additions of components are allowed within the range described in the claims and belong to the scope of the present invention.

In the following description, a buyer is referred to as a buying company and a seller is referred to as a selling company. The buying company and the selling company are not limited to corporations, but include individual businesses.

FIG. 1 illustrates a computer network in which the prepayment method according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is implemented and a schematic flow of information in a transaction according to the prepayment method executed in the computer network.

The prepayment method according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is performed mainly by an intermediary computer 10 which is operated by an intermediary which is a third party, rather than a selling company or a buying company. The intermediary computer 10 may be directly possessed and operated by the intermediary, but may be configured by a server device, a database device, and a dedicated line which are leased by the intermediary.

Further, the intermediary computer 10 does not need to be directly operated by the intermediary but may be

maintained by a separate company under the entrustment by the intermediary.

In a buying company's computer 20 which is owned and operated by the buying company, an enterprise resource
5 planning system (ERP system) 22 which integratively manages business activity processes such as production, logistics, finance, accounting, marketing, purchase, and inventory in the company and helps the company to share information generated in the company, generate new information, and
10 make decisions, is provided. The ERP system 22 manages information on purchase of goods and services and account payables caused in the transaction and stores relevant information.

In the meantime, the buying company's computer 20 is
15 not limited to only one computer device, but includes terminals 21 which are used by persons in charge of purchasing or accounting. Such terminals 21 may be computers installed in the buying company or information devices such as smart phones owned by the persons in charge,
20 and regardless of types of the terminals, the terminals may be connected to the ERP system 22 and the intermediary computer 10 to transmit/receive information.

The account payable of the buying company is an account receivable of a selling company and the payables
25 correspond to each other so that in the present

specification, for easy understanding, the account payable of the buying company is also referred to as an account receivable as needed.

In the meantime, the intermediary computer 10 is not
5 limited to any one computer device, but may be configured by a plurality of servers or database devices which are operated by the intermediary and connected to each other by a network to transmit and receive information.

The intermediary computer 10 is configured by a
10 plurality of devices which forms a computer network system, but only components related to the description of the configuration and operation of the exemplary embodiment will be described below.

The intermediary computer 10 has an access server
15 device 11 which accesses the ERP system 22 of the buying company through a network to retrieve or receive information on a selling company and information on an account receivable of the selling company from the ERP system 22.

20 In the meantime, the intermediary computer 10 comprises a web server device 12. Through the web server device 12, external computer devices which do not belong to the intermediary computer 10, that is, a terminal 21 of a person in charge of the buying company or a terminal 31
25 possessed and used by a person in charge of the selling

company in the present exemplary embodiment access the intermediary computer 10 to inquire about information provided by the intermediary computer 10 through a web page provided by the intermediary computer 10, input information
5 to the intermediary computer 10, or receive e-mails or text messages issued by the intermediary computer 10.

Such external terminals 21 and 31 may be smart phones processed by employees of the companies or may be personal computers or server computers used in the companies.

10 In the accompanying drawings and the specification, the terminals used by the persons in charge in the buying company are referred to as "buyer terminal 21" and terminals used by the persons in charge in the selling company are referred to as "seller terminals 31" for the
15 convenience of description.

In the prepayment method of the present exemplary embodiment, although there may be a plurality of selling companies which provides goods or services to one buying company, in the drawings and the following description,
20 only the seller terminal 31 possessed by one selling company is illustrated and described for the convenience of description.

Further, although in FIG. 1, a computer 40 of a bank where remittance to a bank or communication with the
25 intermediary computer 10 is performed is illustrated, a

computer of a bank related to the progress of various steps according to the exemplary embodiment is not any one computer, but a procedure in each step may be performed in several computer devices of the bank.

5 The intermediary computer 10 comprised a database device 13 which stores information received from an ERP system 22 of the buying company and external terminals 21 and 31 and a transaction server device 14 which performs various calculations, judgments, and decisions for
10 prepayment in accordance with information stored in the database device 13.

 Hereinafter, individual steps of a prepayment method of an account receivable according to an exemplary embodiment will be described with reference to flowcharts
15 of FIGS. 2 to 7.

 First, the buying company and a bank which makes the prepayment with its own fund to the buying company or makes a prepayment with funds deposited by the buying company to the selling company on behalf of a buying company have a
20 consultation with the intermediary, who operates an intermediary computer 10 and intermediates the prepayment of the account receivable according to the prepayment method of the exemplary embodiment, make an agreement and contract for several matters regarding to prepayment
25 according to the exemplary embodiment with the

intermediary, and store information in accordance with the agreement and the contract in a database device 13 of the intermediary computer 10. The information in accordance with the agreement and the contract will be described for every subsequent step.

In the meantime, in the exemplary embodiment, fund providers of a fund used for the prepayment of the account receivable are banks, but this is just one example.

Securities companies or funds may be fund providers other than the banks. In this case, a fund provider computer which is used by the fund provider to prepay the account receivable, transmits and receives information to and from the intermediary computer instead of the bank's computer.

In the bank, accounts of a buyer, a seller, and a fund provider are open and the bank's computer receives requests from the intermediary computer and the fund provider computer to transfer or remit an amount of money between the accounts.

S1: Step of setting limit of buying company

Prior to prepayment according to the exemplary embodiment, the bank sets a limit of a total amount of prepayment for the buying company and notifies the intermediary of the set limit amount so that the intermediary stores the limit amount for every buying

company in the intermediary computer 10.

The limit amount is determined as a limit of a total amount which is prepaid by the bank for an account receivable which is prepaid with the bank's fund to the
5 selling company by the bank, but is not deposited for the value of the account receivable by the buying company, among account receivables which need to be reimbursed by each buying company. The limit amount is determined by the bank in consideration of a credit rating of the buying
10 company.

Referring to FIG. 2, the intermediary computer regularly checks whether a limit of a total amount to be prepaid to a seller is set and stored for each buying company in step S1.1. When the limit is not set, the
15 intermediary computer transmits a message to request the bank computer 40 to set a limit of the buying company, the person in charge of the bank checks the message through the computer 40 and determines and inputs a limit amount for the requested buying company, and the bank computer 40
20 transmits information on the input limit amount to the intermediary computer 10.

S2: Step of determining selling company

The intermediary computer 10 performs a step of selecting and confirming a selling company which can
25 receives the prepayment among selling companies which

provide goods and services to the buying company for which a limit of a total amount of prepayment is determined and input.

Referring to FIG. 2, the intermediary computer 10
5 transmits a message requesting a list of selling companies to the buying company terminal 21 in step S2.1.

A person in charge of the buying company receives and checks the request message through the terminal 21 in step S2.2 and transmits the list of selling companies to the
10 intermediary computer 10 through the ERP system 22 in step S2.3.

The intermediary computer 10 sets a selling company which can receives the prepayment in accordance with a criterion determined in advance between the buying company
15 and the intermediary or the bank and the intermediary in accordance with the list of selling companies received from the buying company's computer 20 in step S2.4.

The criterion may vary depending on the buying company and mainly set based on a transaction performance between
20 the selling company and the buying company, a credit rating or a business type of the selling company. The intermediary computer 10 can access to the ERP system 22 of the buying company to acquire such information and receive the information from the ERP system 22 of the buying company
25 together with the list of selling companies.

The intermediary computer 10 sets a selling company which can receive the prepayment in step S2.4 and transmits a message indicating the setting to the buying company terminal 21 and the bank computer 40 in step S2.5.

5 The person in charge of the buying company checks the message through the buying company terminal 21 and accesses to the intermediary computer 10 to check the list and check or change the selling company in step S2.7.

10 In the meantime, in the exemplary embodiment, although the buying company determines a criterion for selecting a selling company to be prepaid and has a right to confirm and modify the selling company selected by the intermediary computer in accordance with a selection criterion, a fund provider may determine a selection criterion and send the
15 information of the selling company selected by the intermediary computer is transmitted to the fund provider's computer to allow the fund provider to confirm or modify the selected selling company.

20 Further, the criterion for selecting a selling company may be determined in consultation between the buying company and the fund provider and at least one of the fund provider and the buying company may confirm and modify the selling company which can receive the prepayment selected by the intermediary computer.

25 In a case of applying the procedure that the fund

provider confirms and modifies the selling company to the exemplary embodiment, in step S2.5, the intermediary computer 10 transmits a message of setting a selling company which can receive the prepayment to the bank
5 computer 40 and a person in charge of the bank who checks the message through the bank computer 40 accesses the intermediary computer 10 to confirm or modify the selling company.

When the selling company which can receive the
10 prepayment determined by the intermediary computer 10 is confirmed, that is, if the confirmation is selected, the determined selling company is confirmed and stored, and if modification is selected, a modified list is transmitted through the EPR system and stored in the intermediary
15 computer 10 in step S2.8.

Although the selling company is confirmed through the above procedure, the procedure is not completed as one-time procedure, but is regularly performed in accordance with a predetermined period and a selected selling company may be
20 excluded or a new selling company may be selected as a selling company which can receive the prepayment by the regularly performed procedure.

Further, separately from the reception of request regarding the regular confirmation of the selling company
25 from the intermediary computer 10, the buying company

accesses the intermediary computer 10 through the terminal 21 of the buying company to request updating a list of selected selling companies and the above-described procedure may start in accordance with the request.

5 **S3: Step of subscription of selling company**

When the selling company which can receive the prepayment is confirmed or modified, a new subscription procedure for a prepayment procedure starts for a new selling company among the selected selling companies.

10 Referring to the flowchart of FIG. 3, first, the intermediary computer 10 transmits an e-mail to the effect that a bank account needs to be opened in the bank to the terminal 31 of the selling company in step S3.1. The person in charge of the selling company checks the mail
15 through the terminal 31 and determines whether to use the prepayment method according to the exemplary embodiment in step S3.3.

When using the prepayment method, the selling company opens the account in the bank. This procedure may be
20 performed online by accessing to the bank computer 40 through the terminal 31 of the selling computer in steps S3.5 and S3.6 or a person in charge of the selling company visits the bank to open an account.

When the bank account of the selling company is opened
25 in the bank in step S3.6, a limit of a total amount to be

prepaid to the selling company which opens the account in the bank is set in step S3.7. When various information on the selling company and the set amount are input to the bank computer 40, the bank computer 40 transmits

5 information on a bank account number of the selling company and the set limit amount to the intermediary computer 10 in step S3.8.

In the meantime, a limit of a total amount which will be prepaid to the selling company refers to a limit of a
10 total amount for the account receivable prepaid by the bank which is prepaid to the seller by the bank, but is not deposited for the value of the account receivable by the buyer, among account receivables for each seller.

The limit of the total amount may be determined
15 depending on the credit rating or the business type of the selling company.

The prepayment of the account receivable according to the exemplary embodiment is made with a fund of the bank or a fund deposited in the bank by the buying company by a
20 request of the buying company which possesses the account receivable before the due date of the account receivable so that the bank may determine the limit of the total prepaid amount in accordance with the credit rating of the buying company, rather than the credit rating of the selling
25 company.

However, a limit of a reimbursement amount in accordance with the credit rating of the buying company is separately determined as described above. Specifically, when the credit rating of the selling company is low or the
5 account receivable is frequently cancelled due to the defects of the goods delivered to the buying company after making the prepayment, there may be a problem to collect the prepaid amount of the prepaid account receivable. Therefore, in the exemplary embodiment, a limit is set for
10 each supplier of an amount that the prepayment is made and deposition in the bank has not been executed.

Next, the intermediary computer 10 stores the information of the selling company received from the bank computer 40 in step S3.9 and transmits the information of
15 the selling company to the buying company in step S3.10 so that information including the bank account number of the selling company is stored in the computer 20 of the buying company in step S3.11.

The intermediary computer 10 sends an e-mail of a
20 registration guide to the selling company terminal 31 in step S3.12 and a person in charge of the selling company receives and checks the registration guide e-mail in step S3.13. The person in charge of the selling company accesses the intermediary computer 10 through the terminal
25 31, sets an ID and a password and enter various information

requested by the intermediary computer 10 to register to the prepayment system operated by the intermediary computer 10 in step S3.14.

The intermediary computer 10 stores the information
5 input through the selling company terminal 31 as information of the selling company in step S3.15 and the registration of the selling company to which the account receivable is prepaid is completed.

The registration step of the selling company is not
10 performed at any specific time but may be frequently performed when the selling company is added by the buying company or the selling company is added by a periodic updating process (step S2) by the intermediary computer 10.

15 **S4: Step of storing information of account receivable**

Referring to a flowchart of FIG. 4, when the registration step S3 of the selling company to be prepaid is completed, as a preparation step for the prepayment of the account receivable, a step S4 of storing information of
20 the account receivable to be prepaid starts.

In general, in a company which frequently buys goods or services, a buying item for delivered goods or provided services from the selling companies is generated and recorded in the ERP system 22. Further, the selling
25 company creates invoices and/or tax invoices for the

delivery of certain types of goods or provision of services during a predetermined period to request the buying company to pay for the delivered goods or provided services.

The buying company checks the account payable in
5 accordance with a payment request at a predetermined due date of a predetermined period such as a specific date of every month through the invoice or the tax invoice issued by the selling company and fixes the payment date for the account payable and records the payment date in the ERP
10 system 22. Even though it may vary depending on the buying company, generally, the buying company determines a specific date of every month as a due date and a payment date.

Therefore, during the prepayment procedure of the
15 exemplary embodiment, the intermediary negotiates with the buying company and confirms the due date and the payment date the buying company settle and figure out, and store the due date and the payment date in the database 13 of the intermediary computer 10.

20 As preparation of a prepayment request for the account receivable, the intermediary computer 10 requests information on an account payable whose payment date is fixed, among account payables generated due to the purchase of goods or services of the buying company, after the due
25 date of the buying company has elapsed, to the ERP system

22 of the buying company in step S4.1. The ERP system 22 receives the request of the information of the account payable from the intermediary computer 10 in step S4.2 to transmit the information of the account payable in step
5 S4.3.

The intermediary computer 10 checks whether the account payable received from the ERP system 22 of the buying company is duplicated based on information such as a number of the account payable, an amount, and a due date
10 and determines that the duplicated account payable is not an account to be prepaid and stores an effective account payable as information of an account receivable which can be prepaid in step S4.6.

The account payable received from the ERP system 22 of
15 the buying company may include only the account payable from the selling company which can receive the prepayment, but also include information all account payables whose payment date is fixed. In this case, in the step S4.5 of checking information of the account payable, only the
20 account payable for the buying company which can receive the prepayment is selected to be stored as a prepayable account receivable.

When it is completed to check and store the information of the account receivable, the intermediary
25 computer 10 sends a guide mail of a prepayment request to

the selling companies in step S4.7. The selling company which receives the guide mail through the seller terminal 31 in step S4.8 accesses the intermediary computer 10 through the seller terminal 31 in step S4.9 to perform a subsequent selecting step S5 of the prepayment method.

S5: Step of selecting prepayment method

In the exemplary embodiment, funds used for prepayment of the account receivable before due date have two sources. One is a fund of a fund provider such as the bank and the other one is the fund of the buying company.

The prepayment of the account receivable through the fund of the fund provider and the prepayment of the account receivable through the fund of the buying company may be performed through separate systems by separate methods. However, according to the prepayment method of the exemplary embodiment, the prepayment of the account receivable may be performed using two fund sources, which will be described with reference to the flowchart of FIG. 5.

In accordance with the guide mail from the intermediary computer 10 which starts the prepayment, when the selling company terminal 31 accesses the intermediary computer at a starting time of the prepayment in step S4.8, the intermediary computer 10 determines whether there is an account receivable possessed by the selling company, among

account receivables (account receivables to be prepaid)
which are confirmed to be prepaid and stored in the
intermediary computer 10 in step S5.1.

When it is determined that there is no account
5 receivable to be prepaid, a message indicating that the
request for the prepayment is not allowed is displayed as a
pop-up notice in step S5.2 and the person in charge of the
selling company checks the message indicating that the
request is not allowed through the terminal 31 and stops
10 the procedure in step S5.3.

When it is determined that there is an account
receivable to be prepaid, the intermediary computer 10
determines whether the selling company is a selling company
which can receive the prepayment with the fund of the
15 buying company in step S5.4.

The prepayment by the fund of the buying company is
performed when the buying company has surplus funds and
deposits the surplus funds in the account of the buying
company opened in the bank in advance as funds for the
20 prepayment.

In the exemplary embodiment, the prepayment with the
fund of the buying company is performed as a separate
program in consultant between the intermediary and the
buying company. A prepayment time with the fund of the
25 buying company according to a prepayment program, a limit

of a total amount used for the prepayment, and a list of
selling companies which receive the prepayment by this
program are stored in the intermediary computer 10 in
advance and the prepayment is performed according to the
5 program.

As it will be described below, differently from the
prepayment with the fund of the fund provider, the
prepayment with the fund of the buying company is made for
entire values of the account receivable and a discount rate
10 lower than a discount rate of the prepayment with the fund
of the fund provider is applied so that it is more
profitable for the selling company.

When it is determined that the selling company which
accesses the intermediary computer is a selling company to
15 which a prepayment program with the fund of the buying
company is applied, the intermediary computer displays a
message indicating a prepayment application target of the
fund of the buying company, and the person in charge of the
selling company checks the message through the terminal 31
20 in step S5.5 to apply the prepayment to which this program
is applied in step S5.6.

When the application of the prepayment of the fund of
the buying company is selected from the terminal 31 of the
selling company, the intermediary computer 10 proceeds to a
25 step S7 of applying prepayment of the fund of the buying

company and when the application is not selected, the intermediary computer 10 proceeds to a step S6 of applying prepayment of the fund of the bank.

S6: Step of applying prepayment of fund of the bank

5 When the sequence proceeds to the step S6 of applying prepayment with the fund of the bank, the terminal 31 of the selling company which accesses the intermediary computer 10 proceeds to a step S6.1 of selecting an account receivable to be prepaid and writing an amount to be
10 prepaid.

 The "amount requested to be prepaid" is an amount which is applied to be paid to the selling company through the prepayment for the selected account receivable.

 When the account receivable is selected and the amount
15 applied for prepayment is written, the intermediary computer 10 determines whether the amount applied for prepayment is within a limit in step S6.2.

 Here, the "limit" includes three types of limits.

 First, a limit is a limit of a total amount of
20 prepayment for the selling company. This limit is determined by the bank in the step of registering the selling company in step S2.

 With respect to an account receivable that the prepayment for the selling company is made through the
25 previous procedure but the deposit in the bank from the

buying company has not been made because the due date has not arrived, a total of the amount which is prepaid by the bank is stored in the intermediary computer 10. Therefore, when an amount obtained by adding the amount to be applied
5 for prepayment written by the selling company in the application exceeds the limit of the total amount to be prepaid for the selling company, it is determined that the application of the prepayment is not approved.

Second, a limit is a limit of a total amount of
10 prepayment for the buying company. This limit is determined by the bank in step S1.

When an amount requested to be prepaid added with total amount prepaid for account receivables for a buying company whose due date has not arrived and the deposit in
15 the bank from the buying company has not been made exceeds a limit of a total prepayment amount for the buying company, it is determined that the application of the prepayment is not approved.

Third, the bank which pays a prepayment amount for the
20 account receivable to the selling company sets a maximum rate of the prepayment amount which is paid as prepayment for the value of the account receivable to the selling company and the set maximum rate is stored in the intermediary computer 10.

25 The intermediary computer 10 divides the prepayment

application amount of the selling company by a value of the account receivable and when the calculated rate exceeds the maximum rate of the prepayment set by the fund provider, determines that the prepayment application is not approved.

5 When the amount applied for prepayment exceeds any one or more of three limits, it is determined that the prepayment request is not approved in step S6.2 and the intermediary computer 10 transmits the corresponding message to the selling company terminal 31 through a pop-up
10 notice in step S6.3.

 When the prepayment application by the selling company does not exceed the above-described three limits, the intermediary computer 10 allows the selling company terminal 31 to proceed to a step of submitting a prepayment
15 request form in step S6.4.

 When the prepayment application form is submitted through the selling company terminal 31, the intermediary computer 10 starts identity verification processes S6.5 to S6.7 for the selling company to verify that a person in
20 charge of the selling company having an authority of the request for prepayment requests the prepayment.

 The intermediary computer 10 requests the identity verification to the selling company terminal 31 in step S6.5. When identity verification information is input from
25 the selling company terminal 31 in step S6.6, the

intermediary computer compares the input verification information with information which is transmitted and stored in the step S3 of registration of the selling company to determine whether the information matches in
5 step S6.7.

When the verification information does not match, the identity verification request S6.5 starts again.

When the verification information matches, it is determined that the request for the prepayment is completed
10 and the result is transmitted to the buying company terminal 21 and the selling company terminal 31 in steps S6.8 and S6.9.

Further, together with the transmission of the result, a message requesting to pay an amount applied for the
15 prepayment for the selling company is transmitted to the bank computer 40 in step S6.11.

When the bank computer 40 deposits an amount to be prepaid into the bank account of the selling company and transmits the payment result to the intermediary computer
20 10 in step S6.12, the intermediary computer 10 receives the payment result and notifies the payment result to the terminals 21 and 22 of the buying company and the selling company in step S6.12.

By doing this, the request for the prepayment by the
25 selling company and the payment by the bank are completed.

In the meantime, the prepaid amount paid to the bank account of the selling company is an amount obtained by subtracting an amount according to a discount rate determined by the bank from an amount requested for the
5 prepayment by the selling company.

The discount rate corresponds to a commission of the bank which makes a prepayment for a predetermined amount instead of the buying company which has an obligation of reimbursement for the account receivable and an interest
10 until the bank receives a value of the account receivable including the prepaid amount from the buying company as the due date arrives.

When the due date of the account receivable for which the prepayment is made arrives, the buying company of the
15 account receivable reimburses the amount of the value of the account receivable for which the prepayment is made and the bank transfers an amount obtained by subtracting an amount applied for prepayment from the value of the account receivable to the bank account of the selling company as a
20 balance.

In the meantime, in the exemplary embodiment, the amount obtained by subtracting an amount according to the discount rate of the bank from the amount applied for the prepayment by the selling company is paid to the selling
25 company as the prepaid amount. However, during the

prepayment step, the bank pays all the amount applied for prepayment and in a step of paying a balance, an amount from which an amount according to a discount is subtracted may be paid to the selling company.

5 In the exemplary embodiment, although the identity verification of the selling company which requests the prepayment is performed by the intermediary computer, the intermediary computer 10 transmits the verification information received from the buying company terminal 31 to
10 the bank computer 40 to perform the verifying step of determining whether the verification information matches by the bank computer 40.

S7: Step of requesting prepayment of fund of buying company

15 When the sequence proceeds from the step S5 of selecting the prepayment method to a step S7 of requesting prepayment with the fund of the buying company, the selling company terminal 31 which accesses the intermediary computer 10 proceeds a step S7.1 of selecting an account
20 receivable to be prepaid.

 When the account receivable to be prepaid is selected by the selling company terminal 31 in step S7.1, the intermediary computer 10 determines whether an amount to be prepaid for the account receivable exceeds a limit.

25 In the exemplary embodiment, the prepayment with the

fund of the buying company is made by an amount obtained by subtracting an amount according to a discount rate predetermined by the buying company from a value of the account receivable. That is, the entire amount from which
5 a discounted amount according to the discount rate is reduced is paid to the buying company. Therefore, even though the due date of the account receivable arrives, there is no balance to be additionally paid to the buying company.

10 The buying company deposits a surplus fund in the designated bank account and the deposited amount is transmitted and stored in the intermediary computer 10. The intermediary computer 10 checks the balance of the deposit amount through the bank computer 40. When the
15 balance of the deposit amount falls short of the limit of the total amount as compared with a limit of a total amount to be paid to the selling companies in "prepayment with the fund of the buying company" set by the buying company, the intermediary computer transmits a message requesting
20 additional deposition to the buying company terminal 21.

Through these processes, at the timing when the prepayment is made, an amount reaching the limit of the total amount may be deposited in a bank account of the buying company.

25 The intermediary computer 10 cumulatively adds amounts

excluding an amount according to a discount rate from the value of the account receivable selected by the selling company, that is, amounts to be prepaid to the selling company in the order of prepayment request. When the added
5 amounts exceed the above-described limit of the total amount, the intermediary computer 10 determines that the amount exceeds the limit and transmits a message to the effect that the prepayment request is not approved to the selling company terminal 31 as a pop-up notice.

10 When it is determined that the amounts do not exceed the limit, the prepayment application is approved and the sequence proceeds to submission step S7.4 of a prepayment request form and an identity verification step S7.5 to S7.7.

15 The submission step of a prepayment request form and the identity verification step, and subsequent notification S7.8 to S7.10 and the payment procedures S7.11 to S7.14 are the same as the prepayment with the bank fund, so that redundant description will be omitted.

CLAIMS

[Claim 1]

A method of prepayment for an account receivable which is to be paid for sales of goods or provided services to a seller by a buyer, the method comprising:

a seller information storing step of receiving and storing information on a seller from a buyer computer which stores information on an account payable generated when a buyer buys goods or services, by an intermediary computer which is operated for prepayment of an account receivable by an intermediary who intermediates prepayment of the account receivable;

a prepayment information storing step of storing information on a limit of a total amount to be prepaid to a seller for every buyer, information on a limit of a total amount to be prepaid to every seller, information on a maximum rate to be prepaid for a value of the account receivable, and information on a bank account of a seller who can receive the prepayment, by the intermediary computer;

a prepayable account receivable information storing step of receiving information on an account payable whose payment date is confirmed among account payables from a buyer computer to store the information as information of a prepayable account receivable, by the intermediary

computer;

5 a prepayment requesting step of accessing the intermediary computer through a seller terminal which is possessed by a seller and is accessible to the intermediary computer to select an account receivable to request prepayment before a payment date among the prepayable account receivables possessed by the seller, determine a prepayment request amount on or below a maximum rate which is prepayable for the selected account receivable, by the seller, and storing information of the selected account receivable and an amount requested for prepayment, by the intermediary computer;

15 an account receivable to be prepaid determining step of comparing the requested amount of prepayment for the account receivable requested for the prepayment by the seller with a limit of a total amount to be prepaid to the seller for the buyer of the account receivable which is requested for the prepayment and a limit of a total amount to be prepaid to the seller, and when the amount is within the limit, determining the account receivable as an account receivable to be prepaid and storing the information together with the requested amount for the prepayment, and when the amount exceeds the limit, transmitting a message indicating an exceeding of limit to the seller terminal;

25 a prepaying step of transmitting information

requesting to deposit an amount to be prepaid for the
account receivable to a bank account of the seller to a
fund provider computer which is operated for the prepayment
of the account receivable by the fund provider who makes a
5 prepayment for the account receivable to be prepaid, by the
intermediary computer and depositing an amount to be
prepaid into the bank account of the seller by the fund
provider computer; and

10 a balance depositing step of depositing an amount of a
value of the account receivable into a bank account
designated by the fund provider at the due date of the
prepaid account receivable, by the buyer, and depositing a
balance remaining by subtracting an amount prepaid to the
seller and an amount according to a predetermined discount
15 rate from a value of the account receivable into the bank
account of the seller, by the fund provider computer,

wherein a limit of a total amount to be prepaid to the
seller by each buyer is determined as a limit for a total
amount of amount which is prepaid by the fund provider for
20 an account receivable that the fund provider makes a
prepayment to the seller but a value of the account
receivable is not yet deposited by the buyer, among account
receivables for each buyers, and

a limit of a total amount to be prepaid to the seller
25 is determined as a limit for a total amount of amount which

is prepaid by the fund provider for an account receivable that the fund provider makes a prepayment to the seller but a value of the account receivable is not yet deposited by the buyer, among account receivables for each seller.

5 [Claim 2]

The method of prepayment for an account receivable of claim 1, wherein in the seller information storing step, the intermediary computer selects a seller who can receive the prepayment in accordance with a criterion predetermined
10 by the buyer or the fund provider from information of the seller received from the buyer computer and transmits a message regarding selection of the seller who can receive the prepayment to a buyer terminal or a fund provider computer,

15 the buyer or the fund provider who checks the message regarding selection of the seller who can receive the prepayment accesses the intermediary computer through the buyer terminal or the fund provider computer to check a list of sellers who can receive the prepayment selected by
20 the intermediary computer and determine or modify the seller who can receive the prepayment, and

the intermediary computer stores the seller who can receive the prepayment determined or modified by the buyer or the fund provider as information of a seller who can
25 receive the prepayment.

[Claim 3]

The method of prepayment for an account receivable of claim 1, wherein in the prepaying step, the fund provider computer deposits an amount obtained by subtracting an
5 amount according to a predetermined discount rate from the requested amount of prepayment to a seller account, and

in the balance depositing step, an amount obtained by subtracting the requested amount for prepayment from the value of the account receivable in the seller account.

10 [Claim 4]

The method of prepayment for an account receivable of claim 1, wherein a limit of a total amount prepaid to the seller by each buyer and a limit of a total amount to be prepaid to each seller are determined in accordance with a
15 credit rating of the buyer and a credit rating and a business type of the seller by the fund provider.

[Claim 5]

The method of prepayment for an account receivable of claim 1, wherein in the seller information storing step, in
20 the intermediary computer, a list of sellers, selected by the buyer or selected by the intermediary computer in accordance with a selection criterion of the buyer, to which a buyer fund prepayment program is applied, as an application target of a buyer fund prepayment program that
25 makes a prepayment for the account receivable to the seller

with the fund of the buyer deposited in the buyer account,
is stored,

in the prepayment requesting step, when a seller to
which a buyer fund prepayment program is applied accesses
5 the intermediary computer through the seller terminal, the
intermediary computer transmits a message indicating an
application target of a buyer fund prepayment program to
the seller terminal,

when the seller accesses the intermediary computer
10 through the seller computer to select an account receivable
to which the buyer fund prepayment program is applied, the
intermediary computer stores the selected account
receivable as information of the account receivable
selected as the buyer fund prepayment program application
15 target,

in the account receivable to be prepaid determining
step, the intermediary computer compares a value of the
account receivable for the account receivable of the buyer
fund prepayment program application target selected by the
20 seller with an amount limit of the buyer fund prepayment
program set by the buyer by accessing the intermediary
computer through the buyer terminal, when the value is
within an amount limit of the buyer fund prepayment program,
determines the account receivable as an account receivable
25 to be prepaid in accordance with a buyer fund reimbursement

program, stores the information of the determined account receivable to be prepaid, and, when the value exceeds the limit, transmits a message indicating that the value exceeds the limit to the buyer computer, and

5 in the prepaying step, the intermediary computer transmits information requesting to deposit an amount obtained by subtracting an amount according to a predetermined discount rate from a value of the account receivable from a buyer's account for the account
10 receivable to be prepaid in accordance with the buyer fund prepayment program to a seller's account, to a computer of a bank which operates the buyer's account.

[Claim 6]

15 The method of prepayment for an account receivable of claim 5, further comprising steps of,

inputting information on a limit of an amount to be prepaid according to the buyer fund prepayment program by accessing the intermediary computer through the buyer computer, by the buyer;

20 transmitting balance information requesting information requesting balance information of the buyer's bank account to the computer of the bank, by the intermediary computer;

25 transmitting balance information of the buyer's bank account to the intermediary computer by the computer of the

bank; and

transmitting a message requesting to deposit a
difference between the balance and the limit to the buyer's
terminal by the intermediary computer, when the balance of
5 the buyer's account is smaller than the limit of the amount
prepayable in accordance with the buyer fund prepayment
program by comparing the balance information transmitted
from the bank computer and the information on the limit of
a prepayable amount according to the buyer fund prepayment
10 program.

[Claim 7]

The method of prepayment for an account receivable of
claim 1, further comprising steps of:

after the account receivable to be prepaid determining
15 step and before the prepaying step,

issuing a message notifying the account to be prepaid
to the seller terminal for the account receivable to be
prepaid, by the intermediary computer; and

generating an information on the prepayment request
20 for the account receivable notified as the account
receivable to be prepaid, by accessing the intermediary
computer through a seller terminal, by the seller,

wherein in the prepaying step, the prepayment is made
for an account receivable requested for prepayment in the
25 prepayment requesting step.

[Claim 8]

The method of prepayment for an account receivable of claim 7,

wherein in the seller information storing step, the
5 intermediary computer receives and stores information
required for identity verification from the seller,

after the prepayment applying step, further comprising
steps of:

transmitting a message requesting for verification of
10 the seller to the seller terminal for the account
receivable applied for prepayment, by the intermediary
computer;

transmitting information required for identity
verification by the seller who received the message
15 requesting for identity verification to the intermediary
computer, through the seller terminal; and

determining whether information of identity
verification stored for the seller matches identity
verification information received in the step of
20 transmitting information by the intermediary computer,

when the identity verification information matches,
the intermediary computer performs the prepaying step, and
when the identity information does not match, the
intermediary computer transmits a message indicating the
25 identity information does not match to the seller terminal.

[Claim 9]

The method of prepayment for an account receivable of
claim 1 or 5,

wherein in the account receivable to be prepaid
5 determining step, when the amount exceeds a limit, the
prepayment requesting step is performed again.