

Open Customer Systems in the Swedish Public Employment Service

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Background

Great changes have taken place in Sweden's Public Employment Service (AMS) over the past few years. The break-through of the new information technology has enabled us to develop a variety of on-line placement services.

The main purpose of the AMS' Internet programme is to improve and modernise the infrastructure provided by the Employment Service by creating a comprehensive web-site for placement, vocational guidance and information on education and the labour market. Through the Internet development, we can gradually transform the physical infrastructure to a virtual one, creating a higher transparency on the labour-market.

The Virtual Employment Service contains several benefits:

- Information and electronic communication is accessible 24 hours a day directly from the customers' homes and/or workplaces. The distribution of placement services and labour-market information is no longer restricted by the physical locations of employment offices.
- Employers and job-seekers may now control their own information-spreading and contact each other directly, without any intermediary.
- Providing a service of equal quality to all citizens are greatly enhanced. At the same time, the basic services can still be adapted to individual needs, through a high degree of personalisation and interactiveness.
- Since most employers and job-seekers can rely on the new self-service tools, the personnel at the employment offices can focus more on long-term unemployed and other job-seekers who need more individual guidance, as well as on companies and market-sectors that experience shortage of skilled and educated labour. Overall, the cost-effectiveness of the Public Employment Service will thus increase.
- The development of recruitment services on the Internet will also benefit the Swedish companies directly, making their recruitment processes more effective.

AMS' Internet-site has been a tremendous success. Currently, more than 400 000 individuals use our Internet services each month. This corresponds to over ten per cent of the Swedish work-

force! After only five years, the majority of AMS' information and brokerage services are accessed through the Internet.

Current Services

In the spring of 2000, AMS' web-site comprises the following main services:

- ***Job Vacancies***

AMS' web-site provides Sweden's leading job vacancy service. In January 2000 it attracted more than 350 000 visitors, and the number is growing month by month. Visitors can access all job vacancies reported to the Employment Service. If the employer has an e-mail address, this can be linked to a ready-made application form which the applicant can fill in and e-mail to the employer directly. Employers also have the possibility of adding their own logotype and a link to their own home page, as well as presenting the enterprise, the workplace and/or the working unit concerned in words and pictures. Job vacancy advertising is free of charge to employers. An employer can follow on-line how many times the ad has been read.

Tens of thousands of job opportunities all over Sweden are posted each day, and we also offer links to private job-sites as well as to the web-sites of the public employment services in Europe and North America.

- ***CV Database***

The CV Database is an on-line service for firms wishing to recruit new employees. Everyone wishing to look for a new job can register his or her CV at the AMS' web-site. By creating a search-profile employers can find suitable applicants without difficulty and contact them directly.

Job-seekers present their qualifications by means of an occupational nomenclature and search words. For example, there are searchable words for education, skills and knowledge of languages. The search tool is based on AMS Job Profile Matching System. An employer wishing to run a detailed search for people with particular skills bases the search on the same Job Profiles.

An exhaustive list of qualifications is vital in order for the employer to obtain an accurate picture of the individual, and the CV:s should be regularly updated. The job-seekers also add a personal letter to potential employers, where they are able to give a more personal presentation of themselves.

For the enhancement of information quality, the CV:s are subject to minimum requirements concerning content and accessibility. However, to protect the integrity of the candidates, they are able to keep their names and their current employer anonymous - this is an option very few use, though.

At the beginning of year 2000 more than 22 000 Swedish companies were registered as users of the CV Database and it contains about 50 000 accessible CV:s.

- ***Recruitment assistance***

In the spring of 2000, a Recruitment assistance tool will be introduced as a further service to employers. They will be able to conduct an individualised recruitment dialogue with job applicants. This application aims at helping employers to sort large amounts of applicants automatically, thereby rationalising their administrative efforts to select candidates for interviews. Hopefully, in a longer perspective, it will also give us a more realistic picture of the actual selection-criteria used on the labour-market, which in turn will help us provide even better labour-market information and make our labour-market programmes more effective.

- ***The Image and Artists Bank***

The Image and Artists Bank is one of the world's largest Internet galleries. This service enables artists to present their skills on-line in the form of reference pictures and qualifications. This bank is intended to be a meeting point for artists and clients. It currently holds presentations of about 1 500 Swedish artists and photographers. An English version of the Image and Artist Bank is being prepared, as well as possibilities to present video art.

- ***Occupations and Education***

In order to provide information and guidance when choosing an occupational direction and/or a suitable educational program, the AMS web-site currently holds two extensive databases; *Occupational A to Z* and *Educations in Sweden*.

The *Occupational A to Z* contains descriptions of 500 occupations, showing duties, training alternatives, employment prospects and rates of pay.

Educations in Sweden holds up-dated information on more than 3 500 education programmes and training courses all over Sweden, as well as information on different ways of financing studies.

- ***Information Service***

AMS provides a wide array of information on our Web-site, aimed at job-seekers, employers, journalists and the general public. We provide information on:

The service provided by the employment offices

- Labour market programmes
- Unemployment benefits
- Reports and statistics about the Swedish labour-market
- Information on how to find jobs/applicants abroad, living conditions in other countries and EU-information related to the labour-market
- Internet-based papers and magazines concerning the labour-market, as well as a press-room

- ***Call-Center***

To create a professional customer-support for our Internet clients, AMS has established a special call-centre. Here, customers can get support for our Internet-services, as well as gain information on any subject related to the labour-market, educations or unemployment benefits.

Future Developments

- ***New web-site***

AMS is preparing a profound rebuilding and improvement of our employment services on the Internet. The "new generation" will include greatly improved functionality and interactiveness, where each and every customer – job-seekers and employers alike - may create their own, personalised web-site. Here, they can freely choose which services they want to use, and they will be able to subscribe for the information they want and have it transferred to them by the communication channel of their choice, be it e-mail, cell-phone or any other electronic channel. In this way, e.g. job-seekers will be able to get new vacancies and messages from employers delivered to them automatically, without having to search the databases each time they use our services. Our customers will also be able to subscribe for information on activities offered by their local employment office, articles about their occupational field, housing possibilities, create links to other web-sites, and much more. The administrative support will also be enhanced, so that e.g. employers may easily gather all information concerning a specific recruitment - i.e. advertisement, applications, contacts with applicants - in one place, thereby getting a better overview of the recruitment process. The new site will be built up successively during 2000.

AMS is also developing a job-seeker program where job-seekers will be able to get on-line support in their job-seeking. This program will be interactive, and through the dialogue the user will gain access to various testing tools, vocational and educational information, labour market information and job search advice.

- ***System support for internal recruitment***

Large companies and organisations have called for an application whereby AMS Job Profiles and CV Databases can be used for their internal job markets. As a response, AMS has developed a special application for in-house use in companies, based on our occupational templates and on our external placement systems. The aim of this venture is to facilitate internal recruitment by the organisations concerned, but also to provide simple means of combining internal and external recruitment.

- ***Local web-sites***

All local employment offices around Sweden already have their own, local web-sites, within the framework of AMS' general web-site. We are now developing these local web-sites, enhancing the possibilities for information-spreading and interactive dialogue between the local employment offices and their customers. For instance, job-seekers may register themselves at the employment office, apply for participation in labour-market programmes, communicate with their employment officer through e-mail or "e-visits". This will in particular benefit job-seekers living far away from an employment office - which is not unusual in a sparsely-populated country like Sweden.

- ***Multimedia Features***

The scope of services is broadening and the level of interaction is increasing. In the near future, when high-speed transmission becomes more common, there will be better possibilities for including multimedia features as well. AMS is following these

developments very closely and is preparing to produce films about occupations and sending Web-TV in the future. When this is a reality, it will also create new possibilities for performing interviews and dialogues through the Internet.

Conclusions

During the past five years AMS has created an employment service system on the Internet with a rich content and advanced functionality. That this development clearly fills a market need is shown by the large amount of Swedes using our Internet services on a regular basis. We were also very proud to be the first winner of the "Golden Link" in 1999 - an Internet award given to the authority providing the best net-services to the Swedish citizens.

Of course, this development would not have been possible were it not for the rapid break-through of IT in Sweden during the 1990`s, with world-leading companies in the Internet and telecom sectors and a very deep Internet penetration among the general public. In turn, this situation creates almost unlimited opportunities for further extension of our Internet services in the years to come.

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