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She pointed out that job seekers can also ensure the virtual interview process goes more smoothly by taking the time to figure out the spot with the best WiFi reception in the house.

"Avoid setting up the online interview in an area where the Internet connection is patchy," Lee said.

Prior to the actual interview, Lee advised that it's best to remind family members or housemates to keep the noise level down.

"Inform them about the time of your interview so they can do their part to lessen your anxiety by staying out of the frame, also they'll know not to suddenly play loud music at the time."

Gan stressed on the importance of being well-prepared: "Block your interview date so you don't have any other activities planned for the day."

Look good, feel good

A key to making sure your best self is presented during an online interview is to pay attention to your appearance.

When you look good on camera, chances are you'd feel more confident about your prospects during a job interview, Lee said.

She said to consider how you look on camera and set the scene accordingly.

"Position the camera in front of you, giving yourself a medium closeup in the framing. If you're looking at a laptop webcam, stack some books underneath to bring the webcam to eye level instead of you looking down at it," Lee said, stressing that job seekers should also avoid slouching at all costs.

Another tip is to choose a clutter-free background for the video call.

"Avoid busy backgrounds, like where the TV is on or people can be seen running around behind you, because it can be distracting for the interviewer. A plain background is best," said Gan.

Lee also suggested doing the interview in a room with plenty of natural lighting: "The light must not be behind you or your interviewer won't be able to see you clearly during the session."

She added that candidates can consider investing in a ring light so they can control the lighting condition during their interview, instead of relying on natural light.

Lee said you should also ensure that you can be heard as well as seen clearly.

"Test your mic. You don't want to be that person screaming 'Hello, can you hear me?' during an interview session," she explained.

And of course, be on time. Lee recommended logging into the interview session at least five minutes before it is due to start.

Face time

Dress to impress

Dressing up for an online interview is always the better option, the experts agreed.

"You'd be surprised to find out that there are candidates who show up on online interviews wearing just tank tops or t-shirts because they assumed it should be okay since they are just at home," George said.

She advised job seekers to dress to match the environment of the company they are applying for, which could involve a suit and tie or a more smart casual outfit.

"Things like backgrounds or lighting won't matter in online interviews for me but I do want to see candidates take the effort to decide how well – and professionally – they want to appear."

Nurul Alya agreed: "I remember dressing up for the interview at home even though my mum thought it was strange."

Gan said to consider dressing up from head to toe as sometimes, clients do want to see the applicant's complete image.

"It depends on the job. We had a client interviewing a candidate for a hospitality role and they asked this person to stand up during the interview so they can see the effort he put into dressing up. However, the candidate refused because he was only wearing boxers from the waist down."

Meanwhile, Lee reminded interviewees not to turn up for online job interviews holding a pillow as she has observed some people doing: "Put on a blazer and remember to comb your hair."

Interview, interrupted?

Despite their best efforts, things may still not go according to plan for some during an online job interview.

George recalled a memorable session where a child walked in while the father was being interviewed.



KIRUBASHINI RASALINGAM

recalled feeling nervous about her online interview through video conferencing as she was worried that her Internet connectivity may affect the process.

"The child was asking the father when they could go out. The candidate stayed calm and said 'sorry about that, as you know, being a dad is part of my job description'," she shared.

George explained that most companies understand that everyone may not be able to afford better Internet connection or do their interviews in a private space during the pandemic.

"Business leaders or HR people are forgiving about the type of environment that the candidate is in during the interview."

"We can't fault anyone if we hear background noise while they are at home or if there's some interruption with the Internet connection," she added.

This was precisely what happened to Kirubashini's interview session, which was marred by bad Internet connection.

"It was very blurry during the interview and we couldn't see each other clearly. Then we switched to audio only and the whole 40-minute session continued even though there were no more visuals."

She recalled feeling nervous, "but I kept reminding myself that I'm the right person for the job."

Fortunately, Kirubashini got the job after three rounds of interviews. She's now working as a media monitoring executive at a company based in Shah Alam, Selangor.



DEEPA GEORGE

advised candidates of online job interviews to get used to having conversations through video conferencing.



GAN HUA CHOON

said more companies are embracing the online interview method as it is a convenient and time-saving process.



WENDY LEE

advised candidates to invest in a ring light so they can be seen more clearly on camera.

do the interview in a car or while doing grocery shopping, so the interviewer ended up not being able to hear them properly due to the background noise.

"This does affect their job prospects because it's a bad impression to make on potential employers, who feel that you're not taking this seriously and did not respect their time," he shared.

Fiddling with the controls during the interview is another issue as well, Lee added.

"It just shows that you're not prepared and you failed to take the initiative to learn beforehand.

Overall, it makes you look completely inexperienced."

Attitude adjustments

What interviewees are less forgiving of are candidates treating online job interviews as casual conversations that can happen anywhere, said Gan.

"There were instances where candidates thought it was okay to



NURUL ALYA NORZALIZAN

dressed up at home for her online job interview.

Keep calm and carry on

What really matters, according to George, is how candidates conduct themselves during the interview.

"If the WiFi keeps dropping, offer to redo something. We have candidates who have emailed to explain

