

# Confidence

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Recently I was preparing a candidate for an interview with a large firm. The candidate had outstanding credentials and excellent experience in a highly specialized niche area of the law. The candidate was [interviewing with a top New York firm](#) and he really wanted the position so he was a bit nervous. As we explored why he was nervous, I experienced dj vu! I realized that I have had this same conversation on multiple occasions with numerous candidates.

**See [Interviewing Tips](#) for more information.**

The root of this candidate's anxiety stemmed from the fact that, after reviewing the biographies of the partners with whom he would interview, he began to think that his experience was not on point with their practices. Unbeknownst to me, he began to ruminate about many awkward scenarios. Would he and the partners have anything substantive to say to each other? Would the partners be irritated that they had wasted their time by arranging a meeting with him? Was he setting himself up for an embarrassing fiasco that would last several hours? Fortunately, this candidate was very communicative during our interview preparation, and so I was able to address his concerns.

The first caveat that this candidate needed to bear in mind was that *the partners had reviewed his resume and decided that they wanted to meet him!* The foregoing may seem self-evident, but the candidate had become so entrenched in the notion that his experience was not directly on point that he had forgotten this elementary (and obvious) premise. I reminded the candidate that the partners were familiar with his experience, and unless he had misrepresented his experience on his resume (which I knew he had not), then he would be able to have intelligent conversations with the partners.

**See [Top Ten Interview Questions](#) for more information**

It is imperative to remember that partners are very protective of their time, and if they set aside time to meet with you, then they believe that you have the necessary qualifications. The [purpose of the interview from the partners' perspective](#) is twofold. First, the partners want to verify that your experience is "as advertised" on your resume and that you can speak intelligently and articulately about said experience. Second, they want to determine if they like you. Are you personable and approachable (as well as intelligent and experienced)? Do they want to have you pop into their offices with questions? Would they feel comfortable introducing you to clients? Would they want to take a business trip with you?

The second caveat that this candidate needed to appreciate was that he did not know why he was being invited to meet the partners. Perhaps the group was venturing into a new area of the law where this candidate's highly specialized experience would be extremely useful. Just because the partners' practices did not exactly match the candidate's experience, it did not mean that the interviews would be an abysmal failure. I once had a candidate who was trying to relocate to Italy. The candidate worked at a top firm in New York and had outstanding academics. Despite his excellent qualifications, he only got one interview. The interview was with a top international firm that was beginning to do a lot of work in South Africa, and my candidate just happened to be South African! The point is that you do not know why a firm wants to meet you; however, you need to believe that they have a good reason!

I will conclude this blog by stating that confidence is a key element to a successful interview. Rather than ruminating on the fact that your experience is not on point, review your resume and remind yourself about all the skills that you have mastered. This review will allow you to speak extensively and intelligently about your experience which is critical if you want to receive an offer. Whether the partners like you is not really within your control. Relax, be yourself, and make eye contact! If the partners do not like you, then you probably would not have enjoyed long-term success with the group. Lastly, keep in mind that you do not know why the

partners have opted to meet you so assume that they have a good reason which will be conveyed to you at some point during the interview process. The most important thing is to exude confidence because confidence is extremely attractive and entirely within your control!

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