

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF CONFIDENCE IN A LAW FIRM JOB INTERVIEW

It has been said that Johnny Carson used to "feel butterflies" in his stomach every time he was about to do his nightly opening monologue on "The Tonight Show." For those of us senior enough to remember watching him host the show in the prior century, this would come as a surprise. Johnny always looked so relaxed whenever he delivered that monologue, and it was always a hit - night after night. How did he do it? Part of it was learning to control his nervousness. The rest of it was a justified self-confidence.

Self-confidence is a major ingredient to success in show business, the legal industry and virtually every other field. It is not arrogance, however, which is an unjustified self-confidence - the belief that you are great when you really are not. It is the feeling you get when you are fully competent at what you are doing and you are thoroughly prepared. It is the security you gain from being a true expert in your area and doing whatever it is you do exceptionally well.

Self-confidence is also critical to doing well in law firm job interviews. Law firms, like every other employer, want people who are justifiably self-confident about themselves and their abilities. [But self-confidence in an interview can be harder to come by than self-confidence in doing your legal work.](#) You spent three years in law school and thousands of billable hours learning how to successfully litigate civil disputes, make deals, provide advice on tax laws, etc. [By contrast, you have not had any classes or significant experience interviewing at a law firm until you actually do it. And the interviews that you had as a law student](#) are going to be very different from the later interviews you will have as an associate, and especially as a partner. Consequently, your law student interviews will provide little guidance for your future interviews. So what can you do to become truly and justifiably self-confident in a law firm job interview? First, learn about law firm interviews and how they are conducted for associates or partners, as appropriate. Talk to your recruiter. Read articles. Talk to trusted [attorneys](#) who have done similar interviews successfully. Learn everything you can about the firm you are interviewing. In short, find out how to best prepare for your interviews, and then do it. (See the other articles by me and other BCG recruiters for particulars on law firm interviews). [Becoming truly confident in your interview will help you give the positive impression that you need to give. It will also allow you to be fully prepared](#) to maximize the value of the information that you obtain from the interview and minimize the chances of a costly mistake. This includes being well-equipped to handle "oddball" questions or other surprises. You are then ready to give a consistently stellar performance in job interviews - just like Johnny used to do with his nightly monologue, regardless whether or not you happen to "feel butterflies."