

# Why cocky guys get the girl

June 16 2015, by Robert Burgin

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University of Queensland research suggests overconfidence may help people win romantic partners.

Doctoral student Sean Murphy and Professor Bill von Hippel from UQ's

School of Psychology, and colleagues, have been examining the links between [overconfidence](#) and romantic desirability in men and women.

"People tend to think of overconfidence as an unappealing quality," Mr Murphy said.

"But our work indicates that confidence is such a powerful signal that a little overconfidence can actually be helpful."

Mr Murphy and Professor von Hippel conducted a series of online experiments with more than 3000 male and female participants.

"After their confidence was measured, participants wrote dating profiles, which were rated by members of the opposite sex," Mr Murphy said.

"We found that, on average, overconfident people came across as a blend of highly desirable confidence and highly undesirable arrogance."

A key issue appeared to be whether there was competition for their romantic target.

Women didn't necessarily find the cocky men more attractive initially.

However, when men were given the opportunity to pit their profile against someone else's, they were less willing to compete against cocky guys, while cocky guys were more willing to compete against others.

Computer simulations based on the findings revealed that cocky men were more likely to succeed with women in a competitive environment like a crowded bar or club, because they were less likely to back down when competing for her attention and more likely to drive away the competition.

The researchers also found that it wasn't just [men](#) who benefited from being cocky – cockiness in women was equally as effective at deterring other women.

"Our study might provide insight to that age-old question – 'What on Earth is she doing with him?'," Mr Murphy said.

This research is published in *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.

**More information:** "The Role of Overconfidence in Romantic Desirability and Competition." *Pers Soc Psychol Bull* 0146167215588754, first published on June 8, 2015 [DOI: 10.1177/0146167215588754](#)

Provided by University of Queensland

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