

# The PERFECT Introductory Email to an Alum/na

Most schools have an alumni database that they encourage the student body to access for job leads or mentoring. This is a very valuable resource. HOWEVER, the way in which you approach these alumni will determine whether or not they respond. Below is a short example of two introductory emails that you might send to an alum:

## **Email to an alum who works in an industry that you are interested in pursuing:**

*Dear Mr. / Ms. X,*

*My name is John Doe. I am a junior political science major at Davidson College with a strong interest in law. I found your contact information in the Davidson College Alumni Directory. I understand that your firm, Gray, Miller & Plimpton, has a significant litigation practice, an area I would love to understand better.*

*My interest in the law started in high school. While in college, I have taken several political science courses and legal seminars including constitutional and corporate law. Although those seminars were ungraded, I have maintained a 3.4 GPA while also participating in several extra curricular activities including the Pre-law society.*

*If your firm offers summer internships, I would welcome the opportunity to connect with the internship coordinator. In addition, it would be extremely helpful if I could better understand your career path and perspective on the legal profession. Is there a time when I might schedule a brief 20-30 minute call or visit with you at your office?*

*Sincerely,  
John Doe*

## **Why this Introduction Works:**

- Immediately creates a connection to the person by referencing Davidson and the alumni directory. If the alum is in the directory, then he/she must have opted-in to be contacted by students
- In the first paragraph, the author references the litigation practice of the alum's firm, indicating that he has done some research on the business.
- In the second paragraph, the author gives explicit examples of how he has demonstrated his interest in the law, through his major and related classes and extracurricular activities
- He makes a "reasonable ask" (see this article on "[How to make the right and reasonable ask for help](#)"). He doesn't ask for an internship; he asks to be connected to someone who might be in charge of the program. It would be easy for the alum to simply pass along an email address.
- In his ask for a personal connection, he gives the option of a phone call or a quick meeting. Meetings are better for him, but may not be for the alum. He also defines the amount of time he would need. It is hard for someone to say "no" to a 20 minute discussion.

**This is an email I received from an individual headed off to business school in the Fall. I wound up hiring him as an intern for the summer. Prior to this email, I had never met or corresponded with him. It is the most effective email introduction I have ever received. Study it and mimic it!**

*Hi Ronald,*

*I work for a startup team at Microsoft (check out [surface.com](http://surface.com)) and am starting my full-time MBA this fall at Darden. As a recent job seeker, I see how Gotta Mentor's platform provides innovative ways to help with career development. This summer, before I start my MBA, I am interested in exploring marketing / business development opportunities at your firm.*

*Over the past four years, I have taken on R&D management and biz dev roles within Microsoft. In particular, I analyzed revenue opportunities in over 20 commercial verticals and performed competitive research to help launch one of Microsoft's newest consumer devices - we turned Surface from a research idea to a \$XX million business. As a former tutor and part-time producer of educational content for Surface, I've seen first-hand the challenges in making online mentoring viable. For the summer, I want to apply my expertise in conducting competitive research, vetting potential partners, or in content development to help drive GottaMentor forward.*

*Please let me know if you need my resume. I am actually in NYC this Thursday and Friday and would love to meet in person to discuss my interest further. I look forward to hearing from you.*

*Thanks.*

*John*

### **Why this Works:**

- He immediately grabs my attention by highlighting his pedigree: Microsoft & Darden. Microsoft is a first-class company and Darden is a top 10 business school (refer to the [7 Elements of a Good Story](#) article for more on "Pedigree").
- He throws in a "small" degree of flattery by calling my company "innovative" - don't overdo this but people like to feel good about themselves. In addition, he uses a term that we would use to define ourselves. If he referred to us as "a dominant market player", I would have questioned his sincerity and research.
- He tied an opportunity to work at our firm to his own personal goals: "*This summer, before I start my MBA, I am interested in exploring marketing / business development opportunities at your firm.*"
- He presents his background in way that persuades me that if I were to hire him, he could be a value added team member. His project management experience / success with Microsoft and his exposure to mentoring are directly correlated to our business. This also very subtly informs me that he has spent a reasonable amount of time understanding our business and goals.
- He makes a "reasonable ask" He asks me if I have time on TWO different days. He asks if I would like to see his resume.