

# Bentley Alumni Career Services

## The Power of Networking

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### What is Networking?

Networking is the single most effective way to explore careers and find work. *“Networking is vital for those who want to move up in their career. According to HubSpot, 85% of jobs are filled through networking.” Jan 17, 2023* Networking is a great way to turn contacts into connections and develop professional relationships. Love it or hate it – it is how people get jobs! Now that you know that 85% of jobs are filled through networking – how should you be spending 85% of your time in your job search? **NETWORKING!**

### Networking = Research

You’re collecting useful info on industries, career paths, job roles, skills needed, future trends, and how to break into a new industry or move ahead in your current industry. Speaking to people — alumni, family, friends, colleagues — helps you learn more about the world of work and where you best fit. Networking can be serendipitous (e.g., chatting in line at a coffee shop or on an airplane) or strategic (e.g., attending a conference reception or meeting with someone 1-on-1 for an informational interview). You can network with your own contacts, friends of your contacts, or with roughly **60,000 Bentley Alumni** on LinkedIn.

### Networking is Mutually Beneficial

Networking is more about the relationships you develop rather than the things others can do for you. The goal is to build sustainable, mutually beneficial relationships. You may wonder how much you have to offer in a networking situation. Your expertise gained from work experiences, reading journals, staying up to date on trends, and attending conferences or professional events, provides you with a wealth of knowledge that some people may not have. You may also have personal experiences that interest others, such as international travel, tech expertise, or shared hobbies.

### How to Find Bentley Alumni on LinkedIn

How do you find alumni on LinkedIn? Here are three simple steps:

- 1) Go to LinkedIn and search *Bentley University* in the search bar
- 2) Hit *View Page*
- 3) Click on *Alumni*
- 4) **OR** Simply go to <https://www.linkedin.com/school/bentley-university/people/>

Viola! You can then search on where they work, where they live, what they do, or type a title, company, **or keyword into the search bar**. Don’t see the town where you want to live? Hit the + sign next to “where they live” and type in your city/state. Then scroll down to see the various profiles of the alums who matched your search. (A quick search provided 86 alums who are living in or used to live in Portland Oregon, 1,042 in the Hartford area, 582 in Miami, and 473 in Spain!)

### Now That You Have Found Alumni on LinkedIn, How Do You Reach Out to Them?

You can reach out to people through the “connect” button or preferably via email. (How do YOU prefer to be contacted – via a LinkedIn message or an email? Personally, I prefer an email.) If you have an alum’s name and their company, you can google “name of company email address format” For example if you google “Nike email address format” you will learn that 81% of people who work at Nike have the email format [first.last@nike.com](mailto:first.last@nike.com).

## Sample Email Request to Meet

Your email should be short and specific. For example:

Subject line: Bentley Alum seeking Career Advice

Hello Brooke, I was excited to read about your work as a Product Marketing Manager at Netscout. Having graduated from Bentley a few years after you, also with a marketing degree, I'm starting to think about what my next step in my career might be. I'd love to talk with you about your career path, how you made the transition between companies and positions, and any advice you might have for me as I consider next steps.

Would you have 15 minutes for a quick zoom meeting in the next couple of weeks? My schedule is quite flexible so we could meet anytime that's convenient for you.

Thank you in advance for considering a meeting. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best, Emily Steward  
617.555.1212  
esteward@gmail.com

## Questions to Ask in a Networking Meeting

*Remember, you only have 15 minutes, so pick a few questions from list below or create your own. Always ask for **advice and additional contacts**.*

### Questions about their experience and the job

Can you tell me a little about how you spend most of your time? • Which skills or experiences are most valuable to have in your field? • Which qualifications are required for someone to work in this position? • What do you like most about your job? • What are some challenges of your work? • Tell me about your career path and how you got your current position. • What do you think has made you successful throughout your career?

### Questions about the industry, future, trends

Where do you see your career/position within this organization going from here? • What is your impression of how your industry or organization will grow or change in 5 years? • What are some of the challenges your industry is currently facing? • What are some of the long-term trends in your organization? • Are there any professional associations I should join or journals I should be reading? • How would you describe the company culture?

### Questions about breaking into field, advice, additional contacts

What experience or skills would be most valuable to have before getting a job in this industry? • What advice do you have for someone with my background who wants to enter this field? • Do you know anyone else who might be willing to share their experiences with me? (If they give you names, be sure to make the subject line in your outreach to their contacts "Referred by NAME of ALUM")

### Bentley alumni love to talk to other alumni and students.

- Be respectful of their time – prepare ahead of time by doing research on them and their company.
- Do NOT ask for a job. This is a meeting to gather information. They are happy to give you information and advice – they most likely do not have a job to give you!
- Remember to send a thank you email within 24 hours!

## Informational Interviewing

**An informational interview IS ...** A conversation you have with someone who is working in a field, job, or organization that you're interested in.

**It is NOT ...** A traditional job interview. Rather than asking for a job, you're seeking **advice and insight**. While you may be interested in working for the organization, this shouldn't be a topic of conversation. Instead of talking about yourself and what you offer, take this opportunity to learn about the people you're interviewing and their roles.

### Why are they important?

This is a chance for you to learn firsthand about an organization or career path you're interested in pursuing. It's a great chance to learn about the skills needed and what it's like to be employed in a particular field or with a specific organization. Going beyond a job description, informational interviews can offer you insider information about the day-to-day activities of people working in areas that interest you. This is also a way for you to expand your network. While not the purpose of the interview, having these conversations may lead to the discovery of job openings before they're posted. Like all networking, informational interviewing is a form of research. Determine learning goals according to your career stage.

### Prepare For the Interview

Prepare for an informational interview as you would a job interview by gaining as much info as you can about the person you'll be speaking with and the organization they work for. Visit the organization's website and check out the LinkedIn profiles of people who work there. Not only will this help you engage in more meaningful and informed conversation, but it can also give you ideas about the questions you might want to ask.

### Create An Elevator Pitch

Through networking meetings and events, you'll introduce yourself to many people. Being prepared to answer opening questions such as "What do you do?" or "Tell me about yourself?" or "What brings you here today?" will make introductions easier and lead to deeper, more meaningful dialogue. This self-introduction, known as an "elevator pitch" (because you could say it concisely in an elevator between floors) is a way of presenting yourself in 30 seconds or less.

Remember that even though you're coming prepared with something to say, the conversation should still be natural. You may want to use the elevator pitch as a template, but it's always more important to be present and engaged in the conversation. Think of this as a backup in case you find yourself struggling with what to say.

You may want to think about *Who You Are, What You Do, and What You Want to Do*.

Here is one example of an elevator pitch:

*I've been in project management for the last 12 years working in tech and retail. I love collaborating with multiple departments and managing all the different aspects of projects ranging from \$100,000 to \$2Million. At this stage in my career, I'm interested in exploring opportunities in non-profits using my skills in XYZ. I'm excited to hear about how you made the transition from private industry to the non-profit sector and any advice you might have for me if I decide to make a similar transition.*

### Alumni Career Strategy Group's ideas for staying connected in a meaningful (not annoying) way with members of your network.

- 1) Reach out to Speakers and Panelists about what you found valuable or what resonated with you.
- 2) Listen to podcasts--reflect on a conversation and what was meaningful to you. Make them feel important.
- 3) Comment on 3 posts a week on LinkedIn.
- 4) If your contact referred you to people in their network, update them once you made contact and let them know how these referrals were helpful.
- 5) Send them an article that will educate/help them or entertain them.
- 6) Additionally, simply reach out to people in your network to say hello, update them on your search, or wish them the best in the new year. You never know where a conversation might go.