



BENTLEY UNIVERSITY

Graduate Academic Advising and
Engagement

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

WITH MARYAM FAZELTABAR

ABOUT MARYAM

Originally from Iran, Maryam Fazeltabar is pursuing her Master of Science in Business Analytics at Bentley. Before moving to the United States, she built a successful business and gained more than a decade of experience in marketing and entrepreneurship. Passionate about combining data with human insight, Maryam enjoys finding creative solutions to complex problems. She is actively involved in the Bentley community and is grateful for the faculty, mentors, and opportunities that have helped shape her graduate experience.



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Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I'm originally from Iran. Before moving to the United States, I had already built a full life. During some of the best years of my life, I built a successful business, achieved financial success, got married, and created a life I was proud of. Then, around the age of 40, I made the decision to move to the United States and start a completely new chapter. I'm now pursuing my Master of Science in Business Analytics at Bentley, and I truly believe beginning again at this stage of my life has been one of the most exciting and rewarding decisions I've ever made.

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Why did you choose Bentley?

I think most people choose a university because of its rankings, academic programs, or career opportunities. Those things mattered to me too, but they weren't the main reason I chose Bentley. What made Bentley different was the people. From the beginning, I felt a genuine sense of kindness, belonging, and community. It felt less like an institution and more like a family. I believe people do their best when they feel safe, supported, and accepted, and Bentley became that place for me. It gave me the confidence to start over—not just academically, but personally. Looking back, choosing Bentley wasn't just about choosing a university; it was about choosing the environment where I wanted to build the next chapter of my life.

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Before coming to Bentley, you helped grow your family's packaging company and built a social media presence of more than 120,000 followers. What are some of the biggest lessons you learned from that experience?

Looking back, I don't think the biggest thing I built over the past decade was a business—it was a community. Through our family business, we built relationships with more than 120,000 businesses. To me, those weren't just customers; they represented hundreds of thousands of families. Building a business in Iran meant learning how to navigate constant uncertainty. There were times when business channels were completely shut down, and every day brought new challenges. The most meaningful moments weren't when sales were at their highest—they were the moments when, despite every obstacle, people still found a way to reach out to us because they trusted us. They chose us not just because of what we sold, but because of the relationships we had built together.



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Is there a professor, class, organization, or campus resource that has made a particularly meaningful impact on your experience?

One of the things I love most about Bentley is that learning doesn't just happen in the classroom. There are so many opportunities to grow if you're willing to take advantage of them. For me, one of those opportunities was the Sandbox Competition. Around the same time, I was taking a Quantitative Analysis for Business (ST 625) which used R, while also working at FedEx. I had an idea for an app that could automate a manual packaging workflow, and the competition gave me the motivation to finally build it. What I was learning in class helped me turn that idea into a working prototype.

I'm also incredibly grateful for the professors and staff who have supported me throughout my journey. I've learned so much from Professor Akram, Professor Steblovsky, and Professor Cherveny, and I've had amazing support from my career coaches, John Hutchings and Audra Boni, as well as my academic advisor, Alicia Haley. Each of them has played an important role in helping me grow both personally and professionally.

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What are your career goals after graduating, and how do you hope to combine your interests in analytics and marketing?

After graduation, I hope to work at the intersection of analytics, marketing, and business strategy. I'm fascinated by the idea of using data not just to understand numbers, but to better understand people and make better decisions. Analytics has helped me recognize patterns, while marketing has taught me how to build meaningful relationships. When you combine the two, you can create products and services that are both data-driven and genuinely valuable to the people they serve.