

Quick guide: how to improve sales calls with data-backed conversation techniques

Featuring insights from Bitty Balducci, Assistant Professor of Marketing at Washington State University

Overview

When it comes to sales success, what you say is only half the story. How you say it, the delivery, the pace, the tone, can make or break a sales call. Bitty Balducci, Assistant Professor of Marketing at Washington State University, has spent years studying sales conversations to uncover what actually works. Through her partnership with memoryBlue, Bitty has helped break down complex sales data into easy-to-apply conversation techniques that improve sales call outcomes.

About Bitty Balducci

Bitty Balducci is an Assistant Professor of Marketing at Washington State University. Before academia, she worked in sales and became fascinated by why some calls succeed while others fail. This curiosity led her to pursue a PhD in Marketing from the University of Missouri, focusing on text mining, acoustic analysis, and sales interaction dynamics.

Her work studies dyadic sales conversations, evaluating both the rep's delivery and the prospect's response, to identify what actually drives successful calls. Bitty's mission is to bring practical, research-backed strategies to sales professionals everywhere.



“It's not just what you say, it's how you project those words into the world. That's what a vocal cue is.”

— Bitty Balducci

Why vocal cues matter?

Bitty's research shows that the most successful sales calls are driven by three easy-to-identify vocal cues that SDRs can track and improve immediately:

- Volume
- Speech rate
- Tone

These cues can significantly influence whether a prospect chooses to stay engaged or disengage from the call.

Three vocal cues you can improve today



Volume

How confident do you sound?

Why it matters: Bitty's research shows that prospects unconsciously associate lower volume with lower confidence. If you sound unsure, they are less likely to trust or engage with you.

How to improve:

- 1 Sit or stand upright. Your posture directly affects your ability to project your voice.
- 2 Run a volume check. Record your first call of the day and listen. If you sound like you're mumbling or distant, slightly increase your projection.
- 3 Speak like you're addressing someone across a large table, not whispering to your laptop.

Ask yourself during the call:

- Can the prospect easily hear me without turning up the volume?
- Do I sound like someone who believes in what I'm saying?

“When you are on a sales call, you are not just sharing words, you are creating an experience for the prospect. Your pace, your volume, your tone, all shape how that experience feels.”

— Bitty Balducci



Speech rate

Are you speaking too fast or too slow?

Why it matters: Bitty's research shows that prospects unconsciously associate lower volume with lower confidence. If you sound unsure, they are less likely to trust or engage with you.

How to improve:

- 1 Practice intentional pauses. When asking a question or delivering an important point, stop talking. Give your prospect time to respond or absorb what you said.
- 2 Physically slow yourself down. Bitty recommends leaning back in your chair if you feel yourself rushing. It forces your body to relax and naturally slows your speech.
- 3 Breathe between sentences. Your breath sets your pace.

Ask yourself during the call:

- Am I rushing to finish, or am I inviting the prospect to think and engage?
- Did I pause long enough to let my key points land?



Tone

Are you bringing the right energy?

Why it matters: Tone is where most sales reps lose their prospect. Bitty pointed out that flat, robotic delivery signals disinterest even if your words are perfect.

How to improve:

- 1** Smile while you talk, even though they can't see you. Bitty's research shows that smiling naturally lifts your tone, making you sound more engaging and approachable.
- 2** Use natural pitch variation. Rehearse key parts of your pitch with intentional energy shifts to avoid sounding monotone.
- 3** Be mindful of body language. Bitty explains that sitting up, gesturing, and moving slightly while speaking helps your tone stay lively. Even on the phone, your body language changes how you sound.

Quick call improvement checklist

Use this list to prep and review every call:

- ☐ Sit or stand tall to project confidence
- ☐ Lean back if you start to rush
- ☐ Pause after questions to invite real conversation
- ☐ Smile while you speak, it changes how you sound
- ☐ Gesture, even if the prospect can't see you, it keeps your tone natural
- ☐ Ask yourself: do I sound interested? Would I want to listen to me?

Ask yourself during the call:

- Do I sound interested and genuinely engaged?
- Would I want to keep listening to me if I were on the other end of this call?

Why work with memoryBlue SDRs

Our SDRs don't just make calls. They are trained using insights from experts like Bitty Balducci, learning how to optimize sales conversations in real time using proven, research-backed techniques.

When you work with memoryBlue, you get:

- SDRs who understand the science behind successful sales calls
- Real-time coaching focused on improving connection rates and booking qualified meetings
- A proactive team dedicated to making your outreach more effective from the very first call

[Contact memoryBlue](#) to put trained, expert-backed SDRs to work for your team.

Want more insights from Bitty?

This quick guide covers the highlights, but there's more to learn.

Watch Bitty Balducci's full episode on In The Know with Leadership & Growth Advisor Kelly Grafton to hear the complete conversation, including more science-backed sales tips and real-world applications for improving your calls.

[Watch the full episode here](#)