



Let's say you have agreed to sit at a telephone for two hours and call fellow alumni in your city about taking part in the University's annual giving program. You face the task with some misgivings, and you wonder how you got into it. As you place your first calls you're nervous and a bit timid. But the persons on the other end of the line seem to be cordial enough, and occasionally you enjoy a friendly chat. The turndowns are done in a civil manner, and to balance these setbacks some of the favorable responses are actually enthusiastic. The repeated calls become easier and more natural, you get the feeling you're making a real contribution; by the end of the evening you have to admit to yourself it has really been a great deal of fun.

This is probably a fair summary of the experience of most loyal alumni workers who are making "Operation Tiger Telefund" click. What helps to make the occasion enjoyable is the fact that the caller is not working alone—close by are anywhere from four to a dozen colleagues, each with his own phone and all making calls at the same time. In this way a handful of workers can reach hundreds of other alumni with a message on the University's giving program and its needs—all within a two-hour period. A dozen or so Telefunds have been conducted this fall, and a similar number will be staged in the spring. The technique has been used previously in Alumni Association membership drives.

Are these telephone campaigns successful—that is, are they "paying off"? All indications are favorable. Results have been running like this: Of 100 persons contacted by telephone, about 65 will say "yes"—and about 32 finally will follow through on their pledges. Roughly, then, about one-third of the alumni contacted in this way respond with contributions to the achievement giving program.

Telefund arrangements are set up well in advance by Bruce Gray and Jim Wilson of the University Development office. In each community a top alumni leader is called upon to be chairman of the local campaign, and he picks the telephone workers from a list of alumni known for their interest in M.U.

The telephone team is briefed on how to get across the purpose of the call in the shortest time. The workers are cautioned against using any kind of hard-sell approach, and are urged to remain unruffled if some unhappy alum is curt. Various situations that can and do arise are outlined, along with suggestions on how to meet them. The workers fill out cards with the information they get from the callers, and these cards are processed in the office of Development and Alumni Activities, where every effort is made to halt further solicitation of those who have pledged in the current campaign.

Most workers prefer to call alumni they do not know. Generally, women seem to be more successful; one alumna obtained 28 pledges in one session. While most responses are pleasant, some take an unexpected turn; one woman asked her caller, "Is this a recording?" Some say they want to contribute but feel that the amount they can give is too small to help; the caller explains that the emphasis is on the greatest number of participants rather than size of the gift. Now and then an alumnus will say he is pleased to hear from the University and to know that his alma mater is still interested in him.

After an evening of calling from a single location—usually a downtown office, the workers get to know each other better. They enliven their work with reports on interesting tidbits of news picked up during their calls. After two hours of concentrated telephoning, the workers usually go out for a bite to eat and to talk over their telephone experiences. Often their Telefund work leads to the forming of stronger friendships.

Telefunds have been held so far in Chicago, San Francisco, Kansas City, Chillicothe, Hannibal, Rolla, Jefferson City, Mexico, Moberly and Lexington. You may be called by a Telefund worker next spring, if you live in any of these cities: St. Joseph, Springfield and Sedalia, in Missouri; Denver, Colorado Springs, Phoenix, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Dallas, Fort Worth and Houston. Remember, when the Telefund worker phones, he's one of you—and if it's early in the session, he may be just a bit nervous, if not frightened.