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Alvenda Named Winner of Minnesota Cup

The company will receive \$40,000 in seed capital, the Minnesota Cup, and other business services.

September 2009 | by [Christa Meland](#)

Alvenda, Inc., is the winner of this year's Minnesota Cup—a statewide competition that seeks out aspiring entrepreneurs and their breakthrough business ideas.

The company created a commerce-enabled advertising network that allows customers to shop with a retailer anywhere on the Web, and not just on a single e-commerce site.

Minneapolis-based Alvenda was announced as the Minnesota Cup grand-prize winner at a Thursday night event at the University of Minnesota. The company will receive \$40,000 in seed capital, the Minnesota Cup, and other business services.

Alvenda's co-founders are Wade Gerten (CEO), Brian Howe (chief strategy officer), and Lou Abramowski (director of product management). Prior to starting Alvenda, Gerten was an executive at Retek, Inc., Howe headed marketing for Target.com, and Abramowski was a client partner for advertising agency Ogilvy Interactive-Lacek.

This year's Minnesota Cup contest—the fifth annual—featured six divisions in which more than 1,000 participants competed. Winners of each division will receive \$20,000 in seed capital—except the student division, which awards \$5,000. The grand-prize winner was chosen from among the six division winners and receives an additional \$20,000.

Alvenda competed in the high tech division. The five other divisions are biosciences, clean and green, general, social entrepreneur, and student.

The division winners and finalists, along with their business ideas, will be featured in a Minnesota Cup supplement in the December issue of *Twin Cities Business*. Click [here](#) to read about the 2008 winners.

Christa Meland is *Twin Cities Business*' research director.

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