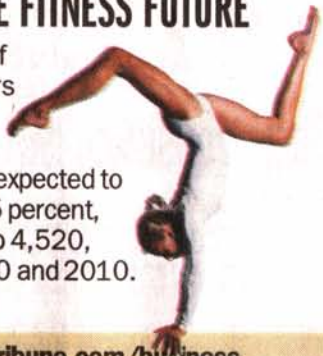


DETAIL: THE FITNESS FUTURE

The number of fitness trainers and aerobics instructors in Minnesota is expected to increase 37.5 percent, from 3,287 to 4,520, between 2000 and 2010.



Money & BUSINESS

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SMALL BUSINESS

FROM THE CALENDER: What is cash flow? 7 p.m. Thursday, 2324 W. University Av., St. Paul. Complete calender listings on D4.

The tonic twins

Brothers Andrew and Ben Baechler have been doing a vigorous business since they teamed up four years ago to create Blaine-based Eniva Corp., marketer of a line of liquid-form nutritional supplements. Profitable almost from its start, their company generated sales of \$12 million last year and is headed toward \$15 million this year.

All the way through high school, Andrew and Ben Baechler were the quintessence of identical twins.

They were co-captains of the football team and record holders on the swim team at Cotter High School in Winona, Minn. They shared first-chair trumpet duties in the school band and were co-valedictorians of their senior class.

Fortunately — for their futures, at least — their interests diverged at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Ben graduated in medical microbiology and immunology on the way to medical school at the University of Minnesota. Andrew enrolled in business, started peddling prepaid telephone cards to earn extra cash and generated \$20,000 in sales in six months.

When last seen on campus — before leaving in his sophomore year to start his own business — he was tooling around in a red Porsche 944 of somewhat venerable vintage.

Thanks to the fact that their dissimilar paths crossed again in 1999, the twins today are proprietors of Eniva Corp., a rapidly growing Blaine company that markets a variety of nutritional supplements in liquid form.

With Ben providing the scientific muscle and Andrew the sales and marketing hustle, the Baechlers have built their blends of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients into an enterprise that produced sales of \$12 million in 2002 and is on track to do \$15 million in 2003.

Their products are used — and praised — by the likes of former Vikings lineman Todd Steussie, Minnesota Wild center Jim Dowd and Olympic hopeful Kevin Jewett.

And the result: Eniva has been profitable almost from the start, with cash flow providing most of the more than \$4 million invested since 1999 in manufacturing, research and development facilities.

Oh yes, did I mention that these entrepreneurial phenoms have not yet celebrated their 27th birthday? It's enough to make a grudging geezer weep.

'True believers'

Despite their youth, they've grown the business with vision and sophistication, mainly using the kind of direct marketing that



Dick Youngblood

Eniva Corp.

- **Business:** Produces more than 70 nutritional supplements in liquid form
- **Founded:** 1998
- **Headquarters:** Blaine
- **Web site:** <http://www.eniva.com>
- **Executives:** Co-founders Andrew and Benjamin Baechler
- **2002 revenue:** \$12 million, headed for a projected \$15 million in 2003.
- **Strategy:** The company recruits users of its products as distributors, a direct-marketing approach that so far has attracted more than 20,000 people to the program.

helped Andrew distribute all those telephone cards.

"We couldn't afford our own sales force, and we knew we'd get lost in the crowd of other companies with established distributors," Andrew said. So he started recruiting users of Eniva products to distribute the line to individual consumers via Shaklee-style home parties and to health-food stores and other retailers through business presentations.

Today the company has more than 20,000 such distributors — call them "true believers" — with more being trained by field supervisors whom Andrew and his staff have assembled and trained.

All of which is a long way from the business Andrew and three friends started in 1998 to peddle a gasoline additive designed to reduce noxious emissions and improve mileage. But then gasoline prices fell and emissions regulation eased, cutting demand for the additive, and he began looking for alternatives.

Enter brother Ben, who recommended the multibillion-dollar



Identical twins Ben, left, and Andrew Baechler created Eniva Corp. in 1999. Ben provides the scientific muscle, Andrew the sales and marketing hustle.

nutritional supplements industry and weighed in with a recommendation: According to the research he'd seen, nutritional supplements of the sort he was suggesting were absorbed more easily and effectively in liquid form than as

capsules, pills or powders. Dipping into his scientific background, Ben developed a half-dozen liquid mineral products designed to promote energy, muscle, bone mass and general health. These first products pro-

duced 1999 sales of about \$1.5 million.

Ben interrupted his medical training for two years — he'll return this fall — to lead the development of more than 65 additional products with varying blends of

minerals, vitamins and plant-based nutrients aimed at about 20 health-related issues. There are products to help with weight loss, others to promote cardiovascular efficiency and still others to help you sleep, improve your digestion or sharpen your memory.

Steussie's pain relief

The twins are acutely aware of questions raised about the safety and efficacy of their industry's products. They contend that their formulations are based on clinical research and that they rely on dosage recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences. Their facilities are inspected regularly by the Food & Drug Administration and the Agriculture Department.

They are careful to avoid claims that their products will treat, cure or prevent ailments. No matter: Folks such as Steussie, now with the Carolina Panthers, are perfectly happy to do it for them.

"I've had knee pain — at times significant pain — for the past four years," Steussie said. Then his massage therapist recommended a couple of Eniva's mineral concoctions, and "the problem has been rolled back about three or four years, from the standpoint of pain levels," he said.

Meanwhile, Jewett, a Minnetonka native and candidate for the Olympic windsurfing team, regularly uses four of Eniva's formulations. The payoff, he said: More energy, greater endurance and speedier recovery from sore or pulled muscles.

And while Dowd's not crediting Eniva for the Wild's recent heroics, he said the formulations he uses have made him "feel as good as I possibly can."

The most interesting testimonial came from a Florida man who claimed that he was able to discard the pills and catheters used to treat his enlarged prostate after using one of Eniva's newest products, called "Motor Oil for Men."

The name for the concoction, which is packaged in a plastic bottle resembling a motor oil container, was chosen after Ben heard an older gentleman talk about the need to "keep my old engine running." Introduced in February, the product generated upward of \$50,000 in sales within 60 days.