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STUDIOS



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A unique e-commerce creative solution

StylePhotos is an Ontario-based company started by brothers Khasan and Husan Aripov. The company aims to transform product photography and videography in the e-commerce space through innovative technology. Whether you're a large enterprise, or a mom-and-pop shop, StylePhotos gives businesses of all sizes the opportunity to create professional, affordable, and effective product images and videos.

Line of business:

e-commerce photography/videography service

Website:

<https://stylephotos.ca/>

Products used:

Moneris Go



The idea that businesses can't be successful because they don't have the marketing budget, is no longer an excuse. StylePhotos is making it possible. We're building a bridge between digital and retail stores. We want to enable businesses, help tell their story, and make it cost-effective for them to do what they care about most.



- Khasan Aripov,
Founder, StylePhotos



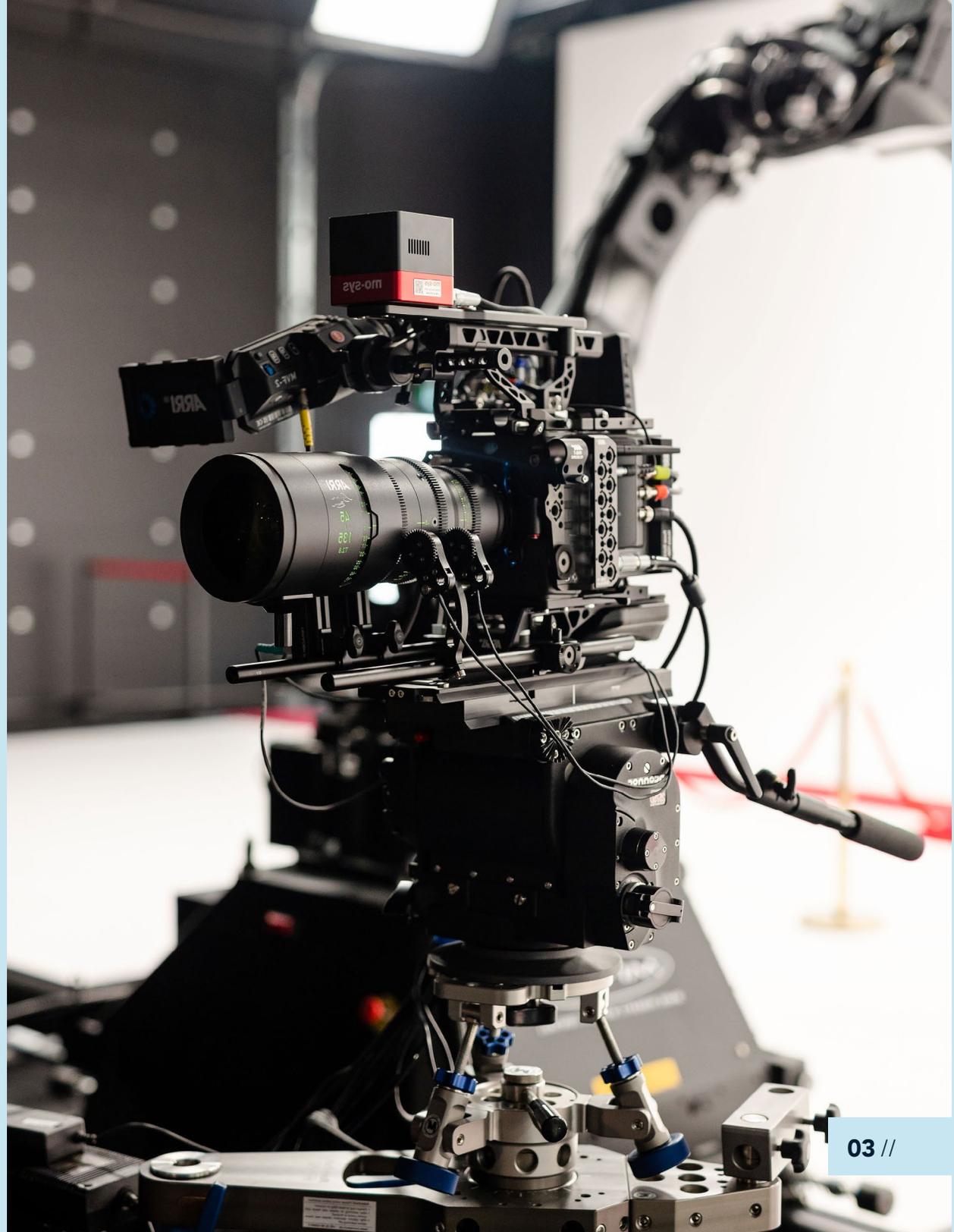
Background

As graduates from the Schulich School of Business, Khasan and Husan Aripov have always had entrepreneurial ambitions. After university, Khasan worked in the automotive industry and even built his own automotive tech startup. Although it started out strong, Khasan and his partners decided to part ways after two years and focus on different projects. Around the same time, Khasan's mother expressed her interest in starting her own clothing and accessory business. While eagerly awaiting his next opportunity, Khasan, along with his brother and their father, helped her set up an online store.

Khasan's mother ordered a large quantity of scarves in a variety of colours to sell but had trouble finding the right company to take product photos for her website. "Everyone we inquired with and liked was very expensive. But everyone we could afford, we weren't really impressed with the quality of their images," Khasan recalled. The brothers decided to buy the equipment themselves to help their mother out for a short period of time. While they never intended to build out this venture into a family business, they also didn't expect what would happen next.

Turns out, they had a knack for doing fashion product photography, and other businesses started to notice. The brothers began working with a lot of smaller Canadian fashion startups and designers and built an impressive portfolio. So much so that larger enterprise clients and leading brands have approached them. To this day, many have remained long-term clients.

Under their mother's company, Khasan and Husan continued providing photography and videography services for various businesses for a few years. Then in January 2022, the brothers decided it was finally time to restructure the company and make StylePhotos a registered, independent business.





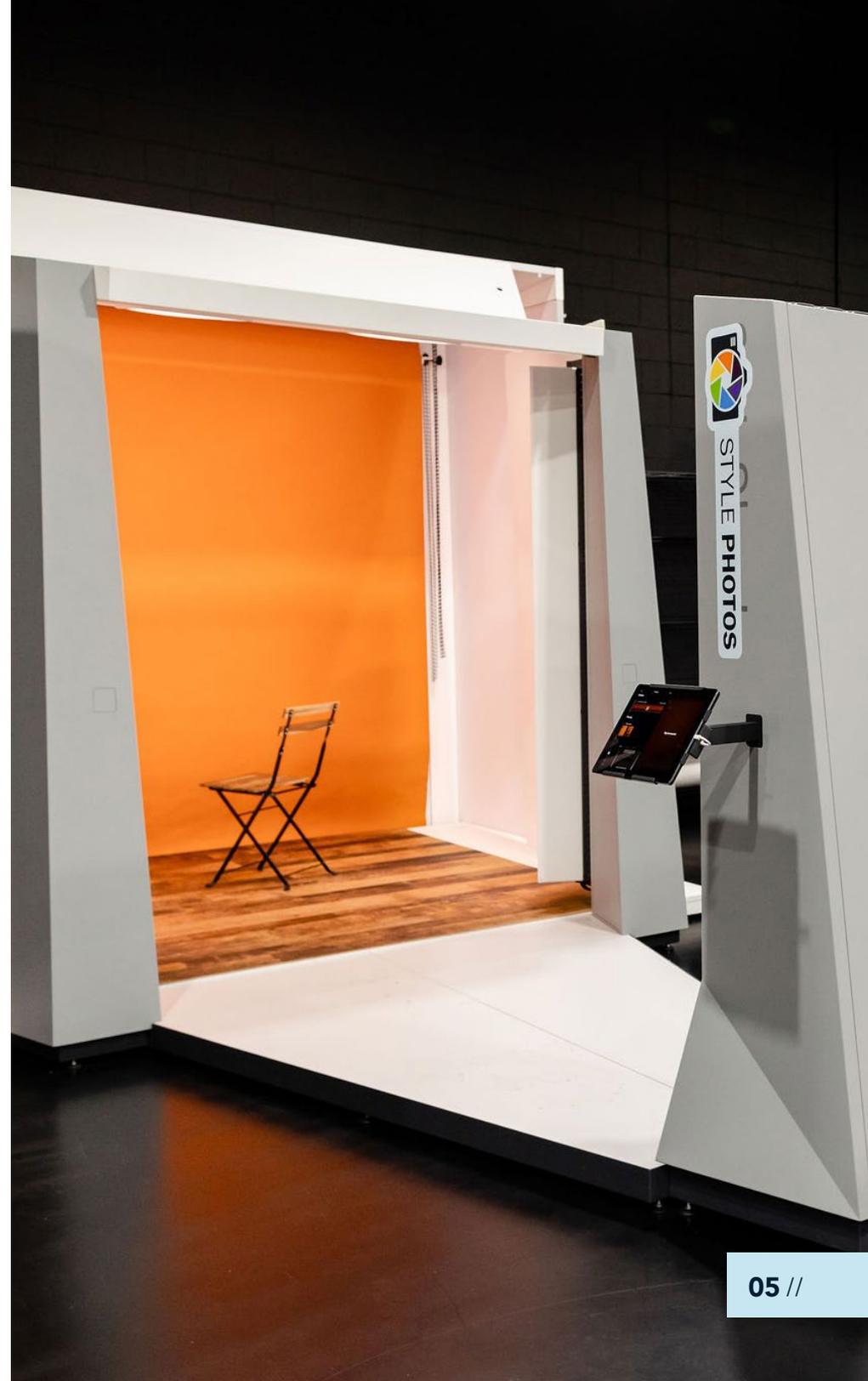
They were able to hire their first employee and rent a studio. Today, there are 15 full-time staff made up of client managers who are all responsible for quality control, software development, and studio management. They also employ over 180 content creators, including independent photographers and videographers, models, and editors from around the world.

StylePhotos has worked with over 400 clients, offering a 'one-stop-shop' product photography and videography studio, and a range of services at an affordable rate. They have three in-house systems that capture specific types of content, including flat-lay photography, live-modelling stills and videos, and machines dedicated to capturing product content, including 360-degree videos. They continue to offer clients: studio and equipment rentals, access to content creators and equipment experts, and the ability to execute unique video projects like in-studio interviews or commercials.

Purpose

Khasan's vision for StylePhotos has always been rooted in his desire to make a positive impact for business owners. "Seeing the direct impact that services like ours has on our clients was super motivating for our team, especially because we see clients of all sizes. It could be someone from your local shop who has the bare minimum products, to a fashion designer who just started on their journey, to a multi-national company."

He understands how challenging it can be for small to medium businesses to keep up and compete in the e-commerce space, being a small business themselves with a lean team and marketing budget. "It's harder than people think. The creative side has a lot of heavy lifting. It can be very costly, and it's not the most glamorous thing for companies to do, but it's vital for companies to survive. Especially businesses that are just starting off and need that extra help. I believe that StylePhotos became that tool for a lot of companies to ensure their success."





Khasan is also invested in bringing tangible results to his clients, whether it be to help increase the volume of sales or decrease the number of product returns. For him, seeing clients continue to come back to the studio with new products and plans to expand their brands and collections is really exciting. It also demonstrates that creative services like StylePhotos are not one-off. "I'm so fortunate to see the growth of many of our clients. How they're scaling and expanding, especially in the fashion and apparel industry. As soon as people become part of our ecosystem, they stay with us."

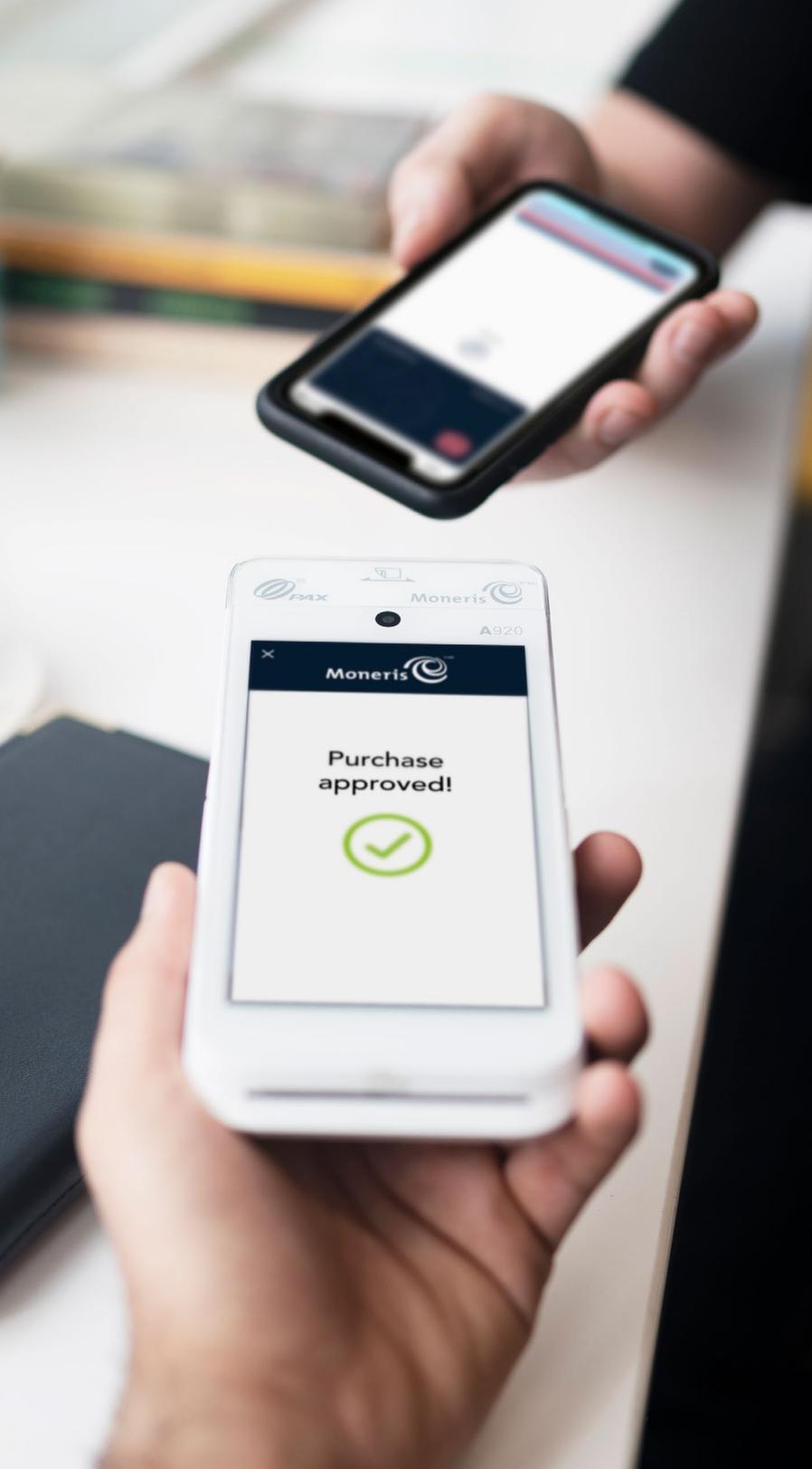
Beyond discussing just photos and videos, clients would also turn to Khasan for advice and support regarding the growth of their businesses. "Our larger enterprise clients are very hands off. They come to us for simple solutions, for example, they'd ship us their products, we'd capture it, then send it back. But for our small to medium businesses, we try our best to help educate and answer any questions they have. We want to build a community where they feel comfortable working with us in all aspects."

Why Moneris?

Khasan first came across Moneris when he was invited by a friend to attend the first graduating cohort of the eCommerce North accelerator program (helping e-commerce startups and early-growth stage businesses). “It was great to see that programs like this existed to support the development of entrepreneurs in e-commerce,” he said. Shortly after, Khasan decided to sign up for the second cohort.

“At the time, a lot of people were confused about us (StylePhotos) being an e-commerce business. So being part of the accelerator program really helped us improve our own processes and activities within the company, and better market ourselves to potential clients.” Khasan recalled having an incredible experience overall. He took advantage of the opportunity to meet with fellow entrepreneurs and experts in the field, including a few senior-suite executives, some from Moneris, who volunteered as mentors.





“They really listened to our stories, our challenges, and rather than simply opening doors for us, they encouraged us to think outside the box. Reassess how we were running our companies and see the bigger picture.”

After the program, when it came time for Khasan to open the very first StylePhotos studio space, he knew to turn to Moneris as their payment processor. “I needed a quick and easy way for our clients to make in-person credit card payments. And now that I was more familiar with Moneris, I just needed to see what solutions were available. I opted for Moneris Go.”

Khasan was really impressed with Moneris’ technical support team during the set-up period, noting that the representative was responsive, thoughtful, and made sure their needs were met. He has since had a positive experience using the Moneris Go terminal and appreciates the Merchant Direct feature (Moneris’ online reporting and service portal for merchants). He also enjoys how Moneris keeps him up to date on current and new product offerings, without feeling pressured to make upgrades or purchases on the spot.

Looking ahead

Over the next few months, Khasan and his team will be focused on getting settled into their brand-new studio space, located at 6030 Kestrel Road in Mississauga, Ontario. The team has added a 45-foot LED wall, a fully stocked studio kitchen, a 75-foot cyclorama and new semi-automatic machines that clients can utilize to capture and create elevated e-commerce content.

Down the line, they're hoping to take on more clients south of the border, "Tapping into the US market has been a dream of ours for a while. We have clients in the US, but now that we're becoming a bit more mainstream, we're hoping to attract more business," said Khasan. The team has also been getting into AI and automation to simplify the post-production process of their shoots and some of their content deliverables. They hope it will result in minimizing costs further for their clients.





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