

Automation is key to growth for big and small e-commerce players

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With online retail volumes booming, Craig Bellingham, founder and CEO of Studio[K]irmack, advises digital brands of all sizes to lean into emerging photographic technologies and processes, to take their e-commerce business to the next level.

“E-commerce in South Africa was forever changed by the global pandemic 2020 when online shopping accelerated dramatically, and consumers started demanding greater speed, convenience and service,” says Craig Bellingham, founder and CEO of Studio[K]irmack, a digital visual studio with automated photographic technology that makes shooting extensive lines of inventory easy.

Local e-commerce volumes have surged as consumer adoption of digital products and services continue to increase in South Africa. Research specialists [Worldwide Worx](#) revealed in May 2021 that e-commerce sales have doubled in the past two years. Online retail soared from R14.1 billion in 2018 to R30.2 billion in 2020, growth of some 66%.





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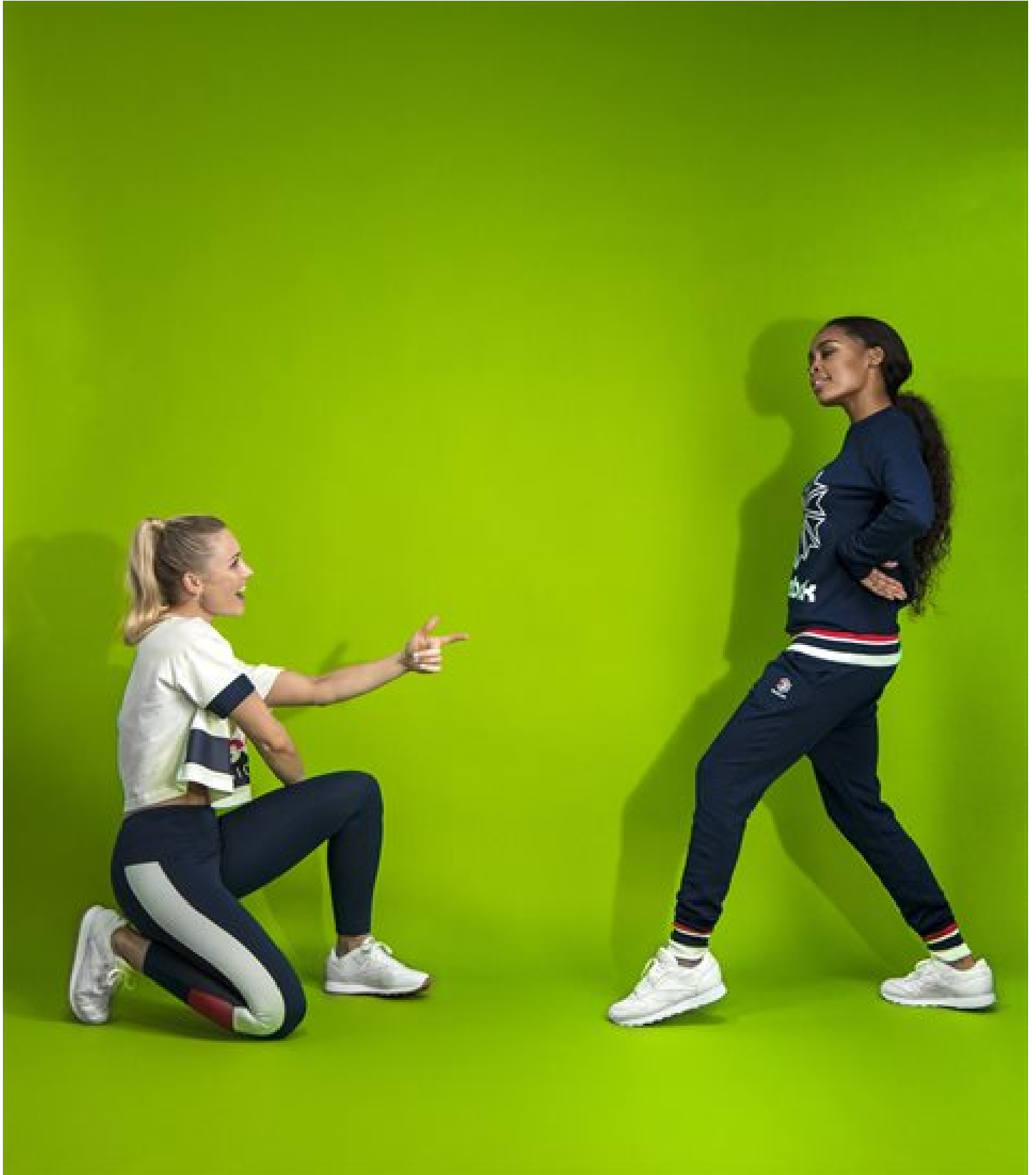
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Bellingham says that his studio is currently experiencing a surge in volumes of bookings from clothing brands like PnP Clothing, Dunns, adidas, Puma, as well as emerging brands like Freedom Of Movement, Tshepo Jeans, "Studio[K]irmack handles intricate, high-fashion shoots from the world's best-loved fashion, footwear, apparel, equipment, and accessories brands," says Bellingham.

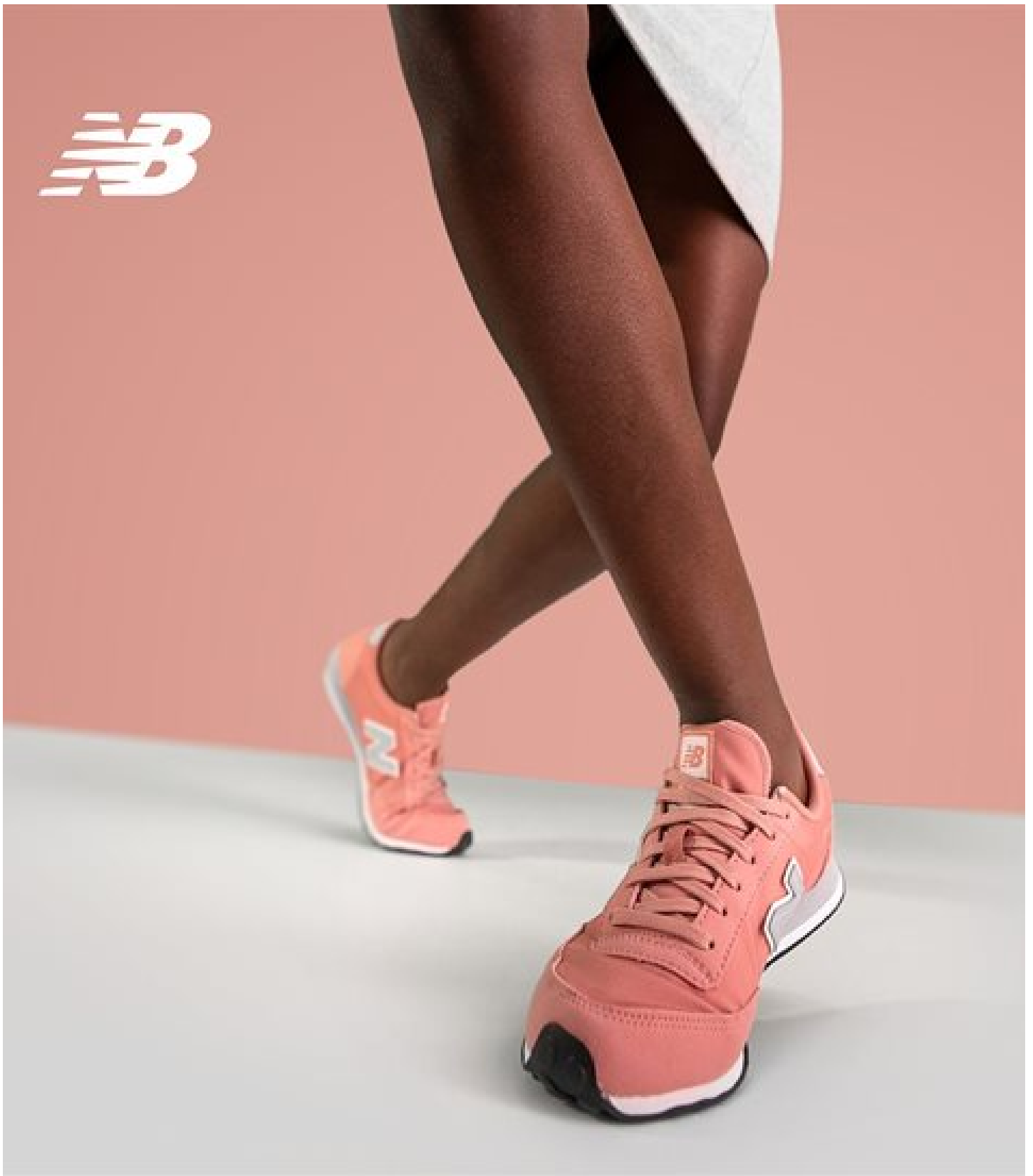
"While many of the brands we service - like Ellesse, Super Dry, Vans – may differ, they have one goal in common. That's getting to market quickly, but with world-class consistency and aesthetics," adds the owner of Africa's first fully-fledged e-

commerce photographic studio using OrbitVu and Styleshoots technology.

Bellingham says that in a world of ever increasing instant gratification, consumers are more impatient and want ready access to trending fashions and technology. “Today consumers can shop at retailers from across the globe. The only response to this is leaning into customer experience and automation,” Bellingham says. “This is why photographic automation is critical because it frees up retailers and e-commerce actors to focus on what matters instead of spending weeks in studios,” he adds.



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Before automation, doing a photoshoot for inventory images took hours and could cost way too much to be accessible for small businesses. Studio[K]irmack makes photography accessible and affordable to all business irrespective of quantities and or assets required to be photographed.

“E-commerce players in South Africa are leaning deep into automation to enhance customer experience, for business improvement, and to cut costs,” says Bellingham. “Evidence of this is the consistent flow of emerging online retailers we have in our studios, who’re photographing complex inventory lines that involve thousands of products,” Bellingham says.

“This is why whether you’re opening a shop with just one type of product, or whether you’re a client with thousands of different product lines, Studio[K]irmack through its technology and expertise are able to offer equity of service.



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Today, Studio[K]irmack has evolved into a top retail and digital production studio comparable with global standards. Bellingham adds “With our leading-edge smart technology, and best of class hardware the result are world-class imagery and content that is quick and efficient to produce. Consumers engage best with consistent quality. Great visuals and video make a product. Ill-considered visuals really hurt revenues,” he adds.

“Purchase decision making is heavily influenced by outstanding content. By prioritising great photography and complementing it with sharp copy, great navigation and an unparalleled digital experience, you’re creating a distinctive competitive edge,” Bellingham says.

Studio[K]irmack has agile solutions for all online retailers. We can accommodate the needs of both large and small organisation's in the e-commerce market. Our focus is attention to detail in both our results as well as our customer service. Using automation can save the time you would otherwise spend in a studio, so you can spend it growing your business.”

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