

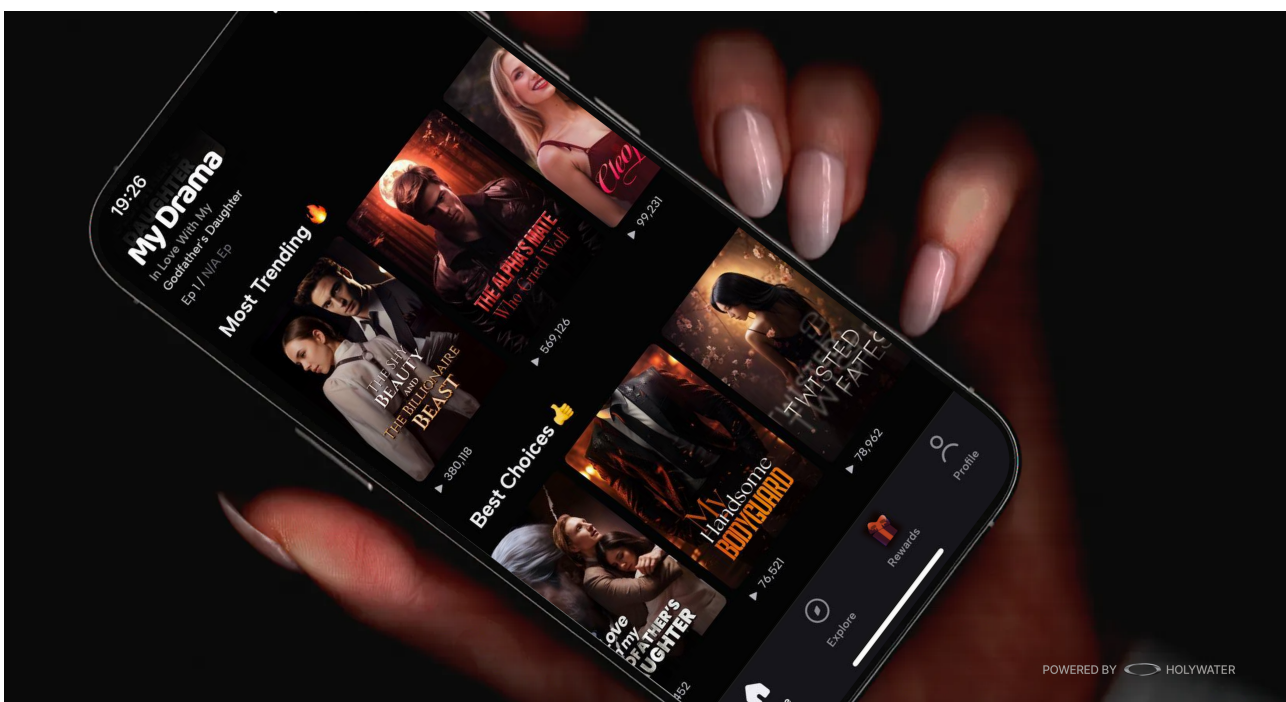
Meet HOLYWATER, the Ukrainian mediatech building personalised worlds for 20+ million users

As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Bogdan Nesvit & Anatolii Kasianov of HOLYWATER about driving innovation in the mediatech landscape, a pivotal moment in 2022 and combining human imagination with AI efficiency.

Temps de lecture : minute

28 October 2024

HOLYWATER is a Ukrainian media tech company building a content ecosystem to unlock creators' potential with a platform, distribution, and AI-powered tools. Their apps include My Passion, the #1 romance book app in over 10 countries, and My Drama, a vertical series streaming app with AI companions to enhance author earnings and fan interaction.



How has the business evolved since its launch?

[Bogdan] We started with \$100K and a team of seven, launching a live wallpaper app for iPhones. We experimented with various products and approaches, but in 2022, we sold our old apps for over \$1M to focus on media tech. This shift led to HOLYWATER growing to \$90M ARR.

What innovations in 2024 are advancing the company mission?

[Bogdan] In March 2024, we launched My Drama, the first app to combine short-form vertical series with AI-driven character interactions, reaching 1 million users and generating \$5M in monthly revenue.

The success comes from three main innovations:

- **AI-Powered Character Interaction:** We created AI companions that let viewers chat with characters from their favourite shows. We're the first to offer this kind of real-time interaction.
- **Rich Content Library:** HOLYWATER has built an ecosystem of content apps, including My Passion, the #1 romance books app in 10+ countries. With a library of thousands of novels, we adapt popular stories into video content, capturing a large audience. My Drama delivers intense emotional experiences in just 5-7 minutes, rivaling full-length Netflix episodes.
- **AI in Production:** We use AI models like ElevenLabs, Stable Diffusion, and OpenAI for scriptwriting and localization, cutting production costs to \$150K-200K per series, up to 10 times cheaper than traditional TV.

How are your innovations leading the

industry forward?

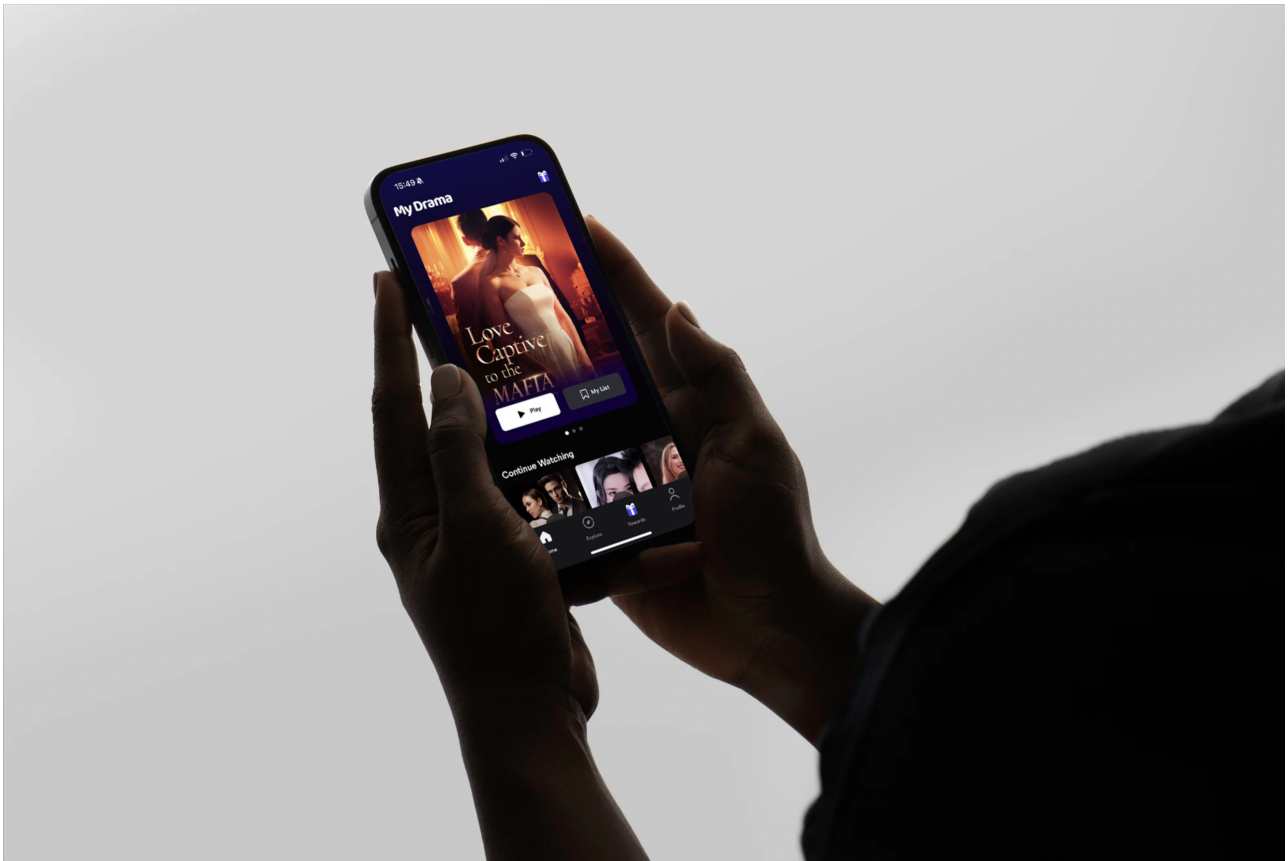
[Anatolii] HOLYWATER integrates AI-powered storytelling with real-time character interaction, setting us apart from traditional platforms like Netflix. Actors earn passive income through fixed rates and royalties, with some earning up to \$10,000 per month.

We produce high-quality series for \$150,000-200,000, releasing new content weekly. My Drama delivers quick, interactive content for mobile users, fitting into busy lifestyles.

How are your company's innovations addressing larger societal issues?

[Bogdan] HOLYWATER combines human imagination with AI, ensuring fair compensation for actors and writers through fixed pay and royalties. We launched the ПИШИ (WRITE) project to support Ukrainian Romance authors globally.

My Drama provides emotionally engaging, digestible episodes, promoting healthier media consumption. The AI companions also help users form emotional connections with fictional characters, easing loneliness and isolation.



What is the working culture like at HOLYWATER?

[Bogdan] The most important thing in business is the team. A strong team can adapt and implement new ideas, making it the most valuable asset in a startup.

What one piece of advice would you give to other founders?

[Bogdan] Figure out why you're doing this. Entrepreneurship is stressful, and knowing your core values makes the journey fulfilling.

[Anatolii] Don't just trust your gut—back it up with data. Track everything, use benchmarks, and seek expert insights to make informed decisions.

What's your daily routine and the rules you live by?

[Anatolii] I've got a few key principles I live by. First, I always make sure to create space for deep work, those uninterrupted blocks where the real problem-solving happens. It's crucial for tackling complex challenges and driving innovation. I try to automate what I can so I can focus on the big picture stuff. It's about working smarter, not just harder.

[Bogdan] There are a few things, but it generally comes down to routine. I exercise, meditate, avoid gadgets before bed and right after waking up, and stick to a sleep schedule. It's also important to recognise when you're starting to push your limits and make sure you give yourself time to recover.

Bogdan Nesvit is the CEO & Anatolii Kasianov is the CTO of HOLYWATER.



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