

## **Builders + Innovators 2021**

**Lee Mayer, Co-Founder and CEO, Havenly**

**Filmed on: September 20, 2021**

**Lee Mayer:** Buying a home is such an important moment. Our mission is really to come in and make sure, in those moments, you've got someone to work with to really help bring that dream to life.

Home design is one of those things that makes your life just that much better.

In many ways, being able to come home to a place that feels comfortable, that reflects your style, that your family can really relax in but also feels presentable and lovely has an enormous psychological benefit.

The idea for Havenly was actually born out of a personal need. I had moved from New York City. I moved to Denver, Colorado, where at the time you can get really sort of large spaces. And I really wanted to a space that reflected both me and my lifestyle but also felt comfortable and beautiful. Most traditional interior designers, to be perfectly honest,

looked at my budget and weren't really that interested in working with me. I think I realized that, for people like myself, there was potentially an opening for some sort of a service that really helped us design our homes to be really lovely. And that's how Havenly started.

Challenges abounded, whether it's hiring the wrong people, going after the wrong customer. You name it, we faced it. I actually started to count at some point in time, I think we got 140 no's from investors before we got our first yes.

For us, it's all about sort of embracing the diversity of the customers we serve and what they need in their homes. Our perspective is something that looks beautiful on television or beautiful in *Architectural Digest* may not work for you. And that's okay. And our job is really to marry your dream with your reality, make it work within a budget, and make it really fun and delightful while you're doing it as well.

Our platform is really designed, again, to make everything as super easy for the customer as possible. You actually can take a style quiz. We use that to help match you up with a couple of designers that we think you're going to

work well with. And then you communicate on the platform. The whole idea is making it easy to provide feedback and collaborate all online on your time.

At the end, you get a fantastic 3D rendering, which looks like a photo of your space. So it's really the visual that helps you see what your space could look like. And then you can actually click to buy everything we suggest for you. So we work across lots and lots of vendors, and you can buy it all directly through us. So it's all done in one place.

In 2021, we've got 700-plus active designers we work with for 100-plus vendors across the platform. We've definitely done hundreds and hundreds of thousands of homes now. I think for the future we'd love to continue to grow our reach. Hopefully inspire more and more people to design and decorate their homes, to help our customers find things that they love, to continue to ensure that we're providing a great place to work for our employees and our designers.

You know, the vast majority of venture capital dollars don't go to women. They don't go to people of color. I'm grateful to be one of the women of color who've been able to sort of

raise capital in this market. And I'm excited to see so many others these days really getting a lot of attention. And so I hope it only continues to get better.

This video was filmed on September 20, 2021.

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