

The **Frontline Innovator Award** is given to a retail store who has shown exceptional inventiveness and ingenuity in their practices during the past year in their interactions with consumers.

### Submission #1

#### **Grimey's Music**

funky@grimeys.com

As President/Founder of the Alliance of Independent Media Stores and co-founder of Record Store Day (plus, Criminal Records in Atlanta) you might have heard of me. No doubt, you're familiar with AIMS member Grimey's Music in Nashville, TN. Doyle Davis, Michael Grimes and Anna Lundy's overall excellence in making Grimey's a fully modern and well-stocked record store, their commitment to the very soul of music is housed in a former church and it feels like it. Their in-store performances and parties take place on a permanent stage on what would have been the pulpit, the record rack stand in for pews. It's a vibe.

For the Frontline Innovator, I'd like to nominate them for their internationally celebrated mural projects, painted by local muralist Kim Radford. The vast murals have served as new release advertisements, and the announcement of Record Store Day ambassadors. Fan interaction and social media engagements are voluminous and charming, but the wonderfals begin and end when an artist poses in front of their very own mural. Please see attached images, that I cobbled together in a few moments. If selected for consideration, Grimey's and I will prepare a professional video going in-depth, with news stories featuring the artist Kim and a deeper dive into the archives.

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## Submission #2

### **Vintage Vinyl**

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Vintage Vinyl for Papa Ray's Roadshow

In addition to producing and hosting the show, Tom "Papa" Ray, the owner of Vintage Vinyl has gone to extraordinary lengths to engage his local NPR affiliate and the state of St. Louis for support and funding his program.

The first season is complete and scheduled for air, with seasons two and three under production.

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### Submission #3

#### **Stephanie Nagy/Spin Me Round, Easton, PA**

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We are nominating Spin Me Round, Easton, PA, for the Frontline Innovator Award. Stephanie Nagy's daily social media interactions with consumers reached a level in 2024 that garnered attention from one of 2024's most influential artists Charli XCX as well as PAPER magazine. In a social media world where authenticity rules, Stephanie's brand has connected with music fans who get that she's as excited about the music as they are. She's not merely a Seller but a FAN. Fans buy vinyl to support artists, and they choose to buy from Spin Me Round to support the store. In a retail world formerly known for its "High Fidelity" attitude towards customers, Stephanie's genuine positivity, understanding and use of social media is what's gained Spin Me Round sustained engagement and support from consumers.

Additional Links:

<https://www.papermag.com/spin-me-round-records#rebelltitem10>

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#### Submission #4

##### **VIP Records**

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This legendary establishment, under the stewardship of Kelvin Anderson, has left an indelible mark on the music industry and the community it serves.

VIP Records has been instrumental in the development and promotion of West Coast rap. The store's early support of artists such as Snoop Dogg, Warren G and Nate Dogg has been critical to the success of these musicians and the genre as a whole. Snoop's first demo was recorded in VIP. By providing a platform for these artists to hone their craft, VIP Records has significantly influenced the trajectory of hip-hop music, earning it a revered place in music history. VIP had so much respect from the community that it never had to close its doors during the LA riots.

Kelvin Anderson, the owner of VIP Records, has been the recipient of numerous awards, recognizing his contributions to the music industry and his role as a community leader. These accolades reflect his tireless dedication to nurturing talent and fostering innovation within the music community.

VIP Records extend its impact beyond the music industry through a series of community initiatives. They offer free DJ lessons and recording studio time, providing invaluable opportunities for local youth to explore their musical talents. These programs not only empower individuals but also strengthen the community by promoting creativity and artistic expression.

The in-store museum at VIP Records is a remarkable collection of artifacts that chronicles the history of VIP Records. This museum serves as a cultural landmark, preserving the legacy of an era that continues to influence new generations of artists and fans and often visited by travelers from all over the world.

The Anderson family's dedication to maintaining VIP Records as a family-run business has ensured the continuation of its legacy. This steadfast commitment to family values and community service has solidified VIP Records as a cherished institution in Long Beach.

VIP Records exemplifies innovation, leadership, and community engagement. It is my sincere belief that they are a deserving recipient of the Innovator of the Year Award.

Additional Links:

[https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity\\_forms/246-e4c5fb5b01b96809e67708ff9eab53b8/2025/02/VIP.png](https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/246-e4c5fb5b01b96809e67708ff9eab53b8/2025/02/VIP.png)

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DBOfxywJl1j/?igsh=MTdvcHRyZmhuZWZ6Zg==>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C-BG0DayHxy/?igsh=MTE0enc3MWhoanV0bQ==>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C5ro8wqpQC9/?igsh=MXB6eGV2d2lwemozaQ==>

<https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/artbound/riots-rivalries-and-rap-long-beachs-iconic-vip-records-deserves-a-museum>

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#### **Submission #5**

##### **Darryl Harris - Moods Music**

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I am nominating Moods Music. They have been in business for over 25 years. You can get stereo equipment, black art, garden plants, along with ice cream and many other treats. The store has an eclectic vibes I. Even Shaquille O'Neal shops there.

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## Submission #6

### AMAZON MUSIC

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Amazon Music, in partnership with Roc Nation and WMG, led a first of its kind collaboration for Megan Thee Stallion's new album MEGAN and start of her Tour. The collaboration started with the launch of Megan's North American tour with an exclusive collection of merchandise in-venue as well as her online storefront at [amazon.com/MeganTheeStallion](https://amazon.com/MeganTheeStallion). The collection featured "Hot Girl Shorts" and beach accessories for Hot Girl Summer. With Prime Shipping, fans could purchase the merch ahead of their local tour date, or skip the long line at the venues to get the merch delivered directly to their doorstep.

Next, the collaboration with Megan included a global ad campaign featuring Megan that promoted Amazon's yearly Prime Day retail event, featuring an Amazon Original exclusive track from Megan, "It's Prime Day (Amazon Music Original)," that was created by the rap star specifically for the commercial. The spot featured multiple personas of Megan, e.g. Megan Thee Cosplayer, Megan Thee Stylist, Megan Thee Chef, and more. These personas were reflected as part of her Amazon store, including a second drop of merchandise available to purchase and early Prime Day deals on her initial merch drop.

The exclusive track featured in the commercial was a massive success. Megan released the new song just days ahead of her album drop with a social post telling her fans to "Ask Alexa to play a hottie beat," which in turn would play the instrumental version of the track. Upon album release, the song was included in an "Amazon Exclusive" version of Megan's album, and the popularity of the track, along with a song-by-song interview, elevating the visibility of the album. The Prime Day commercial also featured Megan sporting her own "Hot Girl" red shorts that fans immediately flocked to her storefront and merch booths to buy.

The merch launch exceeded expectations across online and in-venue forecasts. This was one of the most successful launches for the Music Merch team in first half of 2024 due to the incredible content Megan created for her social accounts which promoted her merch line. Customer feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with customers excited they can purchase the tour merch ahead of the show to have as part of their concert outfit.

Additional Links:

<https://amazoncorporate.box.com/s/gst6o3hsy12jubum4m0nr1i099oqpkpe>

Listen to the original track on Amazon Music: <https://music.amazon.com/albums/B0D7QWFSBK>

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## Submission #7

### Fingerprints Music

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Fingerprints Music in Long Beach, CA, has long had a huge focus on the customer experience and the amazing events they host for the community. This includes in-store autograph signings, performance, listening parties and even art shows that are related to music. They really focus on the fan experience and go the extra mile to make sure the events happen smoothly, including extra legwork that the local authorities sometimes require of them. The end result is that the music fan/customer walks away having had a fabulous experience and really understanding how important the indie record store is as a local cultural community center when connection with other like-minded people happens. They are one of my indie record store heroes!

#### Additional Links:

[https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity\\_forms/246-e4c5fb5b01b96809e67708ff9eab53b8/2024/11/fingerprints-linkin-park-early-listening-party.PNG](https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/246-e4c5fb5b01b96809e67708ff9eab53b8/2024/11/fingerprints-linkin-park-early-listening-party.PNG)

[https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity\\_forms/246-e4c5fb5b01b96809e67708ff9eab53b8/2024/11/fingerprints-cure-art-show.PNG](https://musicbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/246-e4c5fb5b01b96809e67708ff9eab53b8/2024/11/fingerprints-cure-art-show.PNG)

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