

# A Different Kind of 'Light'

AT THIS CALIFORNIA CIRCLE K, IT'S THE MUSIC THAT MAKES THE ATMOSPHERE

It's not uncommon for the customers at Dave Corcoran's Circle K store in La Mesa, Calif., to walk out of the store humming. Thanks to "The Alternative," the in-store music system he subscribes to, Corcoran's customers are likely to leave with their morning coffee and a song in their heart — well, if not their heart, at least their head.

"I love it, my customers love it and even my employees love it," said Corcoran of the system he installed about three years ago. The Alternative offers uninterrupted mellow music, mostly from the 60s and 70s on a continuous-play CD system — everything from the Beatles to the Beach Boys, with occasional nods to more contemporary artists.

It's the brainchild of former college disc jockey Bob Charles who, after graduation, found himself a job selling medical supplies. In that job, he began to notice



**Bob Charles first introduced The Alternative music system for professional office use, but is now bringing it into the retail sector.**

the "elevator music" that permeated doctors' offices, and his inner deejay took over. Charles began making mixed music tapes for his clients, which led to the development of The Alternative. Today he supplies music on a monthly subscription basis from his studio in Carlsbad, Calif., to professional offices, and has been putting out feelers to

restaurants and local retail businesses.

For Corcoran, The Alternative provided a solution to a problem many c-store operators can identify with: employees who play their own radios behind the counter. "You would have customers coming in in the morning and having Howard Stern blaring at them," he said. "We didn't want anything that would distract or offend customers. This system helps provide a good atmosphere and a pleasant shopping experience."

The Alternative currently consists of nearly 200 80-minute CDs of music from the 60s through the 90s with new songs added about every three to four months. They can be stored in a standard 300-CD player that will allow the user to go for 25 days without hearing the same song twice in an eight-hour period. Charles also offers rental options for the player. He can be reached at (619) 441-1111.