

Dilenschneider Defines the Rules

PR Guru From Darien Says Technology is Key to Survival in Business

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After nearly 40 years of experience in public relations, Darien resident Robert L. Dilenschneider hopes his 13th book, "Power and Influence: The Rules Have Changed," will help people learn to use technology to maximize their potential for success in the modern business world.

Dilenschneider's books have placed an emphasis on building relationships with an ever-broadening network of people in a given of work and not shying away from utilizing them when needed. He learned this idea when getting his foot in the door of the business world in 1967.



ROBERT L. DILENSCHNEIDER

After graduating from Notre Dame in 1965 and then earning a master's degree in journalism from Ohio State, Dilenschneider came to New York City on a bus looking for a job. It was at an interview at a corporation in Manhattan that Dilenschneider developed one of his first business relationships and saw it immediately pay dividends that shaped the rest of his career.

"I had been to Ogilvy & Mather and met a guy named Sam Frye. He offered me a job for \$11,000 a year and I said, 'I'll take it,'" Dilenschneider said. "But (Frye) said, 'No, I'd like you to go meet these guys at Hill and Knowlton Inc. I think it may be better for you.' So I met the guys, I liked them, and took the job for \$10,000."

Dilenschneider remained at Hill and Knowlton for the next 23 years, working his way up the corporate ladder until he became the public relations company's president and chief executive officer in 1986. Dilenschneider said he never forgot the help that Frye had given him.

"Every year for 15 years before Mr. Frye died, I took him to lunch and thanked him for setting me on that course" Dilenschneider said.

When Dilenschneider led Hill and Knowlton, the company was among the largest in the world, tripling its revenues to almost \$200 million and generating more than \$30 million in profits. In 1990, Dilenschneider left Hill

people are coming about the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Other people are coming about their stock prices. People are coming to talk about the world economic forum in Switzerland," Dilenschneider said. "(This) week I'll be over in Lake Como (Italy) at the Ambrossetti Conference and people will want to know what takes place there from the point of view of the European Central bank. People are coming for everything."

As a result of the variety of clients that he works with, in addition to his previous experience at Hill and Knowlton,

Dilenschneider has need-

ed to remain

on the

cutting

edge of

everything

relating to

business. He

has parlayed

this knowledge

into 13 books

that cover the

spectrum of different

stages in

ones professional

life, ranging from

titles on how to

begin a career in

business to ones

describing how to be

an effective chief executive

officer.

Dilenschneider's newest

book, "Power and

Influence: The Rules Have

Changed," contains lessons

for people at various stages

in their careers. It focuses on

how to achieve success by utilizing

new technological ideas

to ones benefit.

"The book is really about

the fact that all the rules have

changed. They fundamentally

change because of technology,"

Dilenschneider said. "If you are an

old person and understand technolo-

gy, you can do better than younger

people. If you can marry content and

technology, you can become very suc-

cessful."

He added that technology has changed

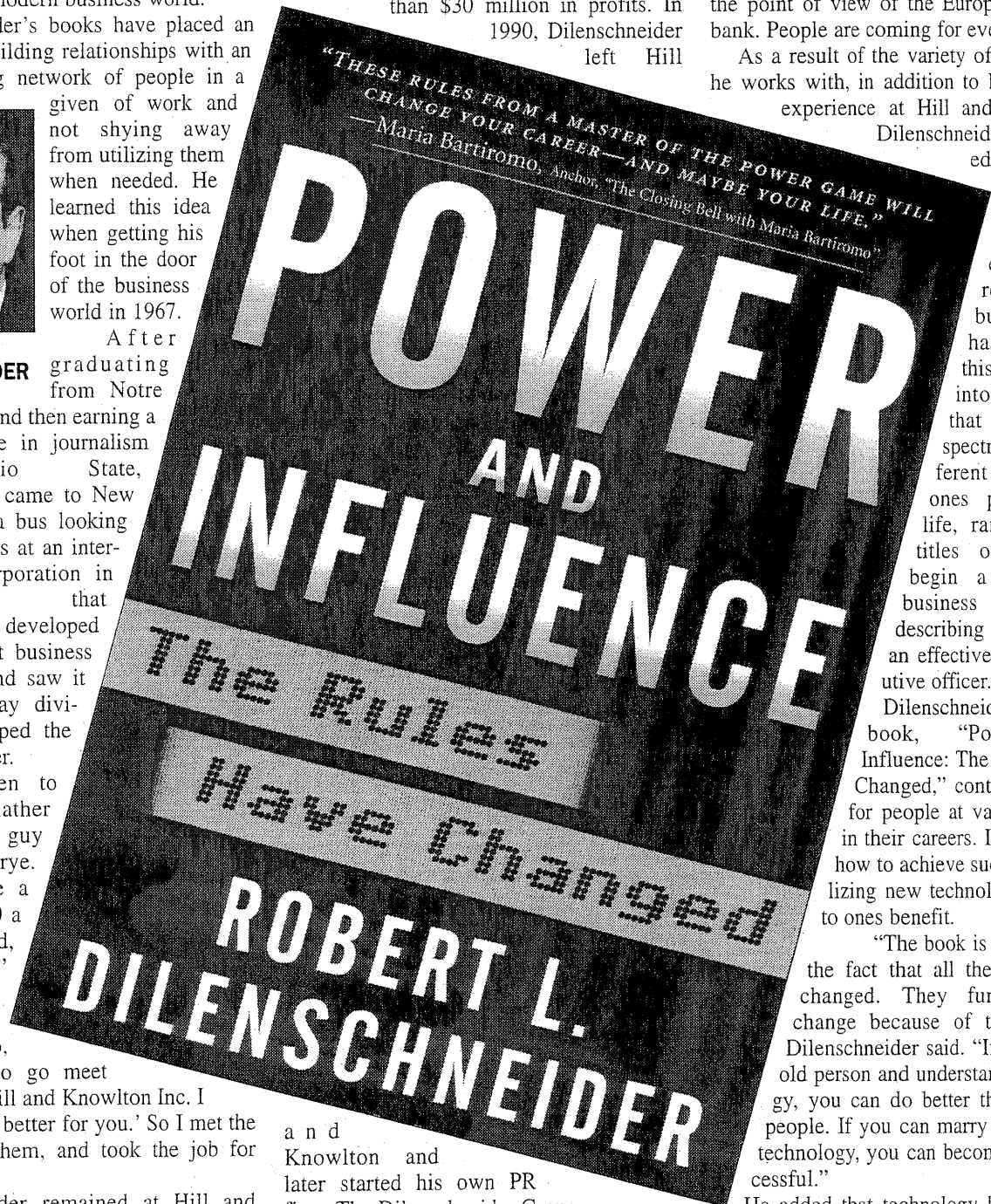
the ways that businesses work. CEOs

who formerly would hide from the public

are now contributing to their company's

blogs.

Businesses that used to rely on other



and Knowlton and later started his own PR firm, The Dilenschneider Group.

At The Dilenschneider Group, which is based in Manhattan, he said he has been approached for consultation on almost anything imaginable.

"Some people come about their interest to take a role in the America's Cup. Other

companies in their office park can now use the Internet to talk to companies all over the world. Dilenschneider was very excited by technological progressions such as these and wrote the book to make sure that people were ready to adapt to such changes.

"It's going to get very interesting in the next 10 years because globalization has come in," he said during an interview last Friday. "I just came from a meeting with a guy from Paris, France. I just met with him 10 minutes ago. This afternoon I'm gonna meet with some Japanese and then late in the day I'm going to meet with some Turks, and that is all going to happen right here in Darien.

"Twenty years ago that wouldn't happen," Dilenschneider added. "You would meet with people from Connecticut and that would be it. But now it's a huge world and you have to be alert to things happening all the time."

Dilenschneider based the book on 10 precepts — each of which has its own chapter — that he felt were going to shape the business world in the next 10 to 15 years. They include the need to adapt to technology and not ignore it, focusing on one's strengths to properly market oneself, and sharing and using power for good instead of being arrogant and stubborn.

Dilenschneider felt that many of these ideas are new to the business world and must be understood if one wants to have a successful career. The underlying message of "Power and Influence: The Rules Have Changed," he said, is that one needs to continually adapt with the changes. It's an idea that Dilenschneider feels is essential in regard to technology, but also important in regard to one's mindset.

"People don't want to change. They like the status quo," he said. "It's very difficult to say to yourself that there is a new set of conditions and if I want to succeed I have to adapt to it. It is very, very hard. They want to have things the way they were, but society won't permit that. You've got to be aware of all of this stuff. And if you're not, you better get ready for early retirement."

Dilenschneider has also found that living in Darien, which he has called home since 1996, has been very important to his experience as a businessman.

"It's exciting out here," he said

His book includes many references to Darien residents and local companies that he has developed relationships with. Dilenschneider attributes their inclusion to an inordinate amount and variety of talent in the area.

"I find that there are a lot of people in Fairfield County who make up the fabric of the United States," Dilenschneider said. "There are financial people, there are entrepreneurs, there are inventors. There are really interesting people who live here. I think Fairfield County is one of the best secrets in the United States."

Dilenschneider is working on his 14th book, which he described as "what CEOs know that you don't.

"There are a lot of things that the man or woman at the top knows that most people don't know, and it gives them a competitive edge," he said.

While "Power and Influence: The Rules Have Changed" has been in bookstores for about three weeks, Dilenschneider said that the formal launch occurs this week, with additional advertisements to appear in airports and coffee shops in September. In Darien, the book is available at Barrett Bookstore, 314 Heights Road.

Asked if he thought the book would sell well, Dilenschneider seemed to follow one of its main arguments: namely, that "arrogance is out. Sharing and humility is in."

"I hope so," Dilenschneider said as he crossed his fingers with a smile.