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Power Broker

In his new book, *Power and Influence: The Rules Have Changed* (McGraw-Hill, 2007) Robert Dilenschneider, power broker and PR maven extraordinaire, adds to the wealth of information from his eight previous books on how to help people in power and how to get there yourself.

Some facts: Robert L. Dilenschneider, founder and CEO, The Dilenschneider Group. **Degrees:** University of Notre Dame, BA; Ohio State University, MA in Journalism. **Hometown:** Born in New York City, grew up in Pittsburgh, PA. **Career history:** The Center for Vocational and Technical Education, briefly. Hill and Knowlton, Inc., worked up the ladder to president and CEO, 25 years. Founder and CEO, The Dilenschneider Group, 17 years to present.

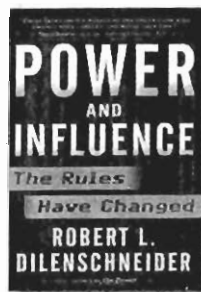
Dilenschneider, who has counseled

major corporations, professional groups, trade associations, and educational institutions, provides frequent media commentary and industry insights on major issues of the day. He offers this advice for when you have to give a customer or executive bad news.

“Most powerful people are surrounded by people who won’t tell them the truth, because telling the truth may compromise their own positions. But powerful people who are successful like the truth. They want the truth. Because the truth enables them to make better decisions. So the challenge is to present the truth in a way that doesn’t get you killed in the process.”

Dilenschneider suggests using a cushioning technique. “You say things at the beginning such as, ‘This is very difficult,

but you need to know this.’ Or, ‘The fate of the company depends on what I’m about to tell you.’ Or, ‘You’re probably not getting this from a lot of people, but...’” Dilenschneider adds that bad news should come with possible remedies or at least suggestions for dealing with bad news.



He also suggests thinking about an issue before offering suggestions. “Frequently I print things out because I want to think about them,” he says. “I don’t want to make a snap decision. For instance, somebody sent me

an email about something they wanted done in Washington, DC, and I could have answered right away, but I sat and thought about it, and my actual answer ended up 180 degrees from my initial thought.”

It’s a good thought. – LISA GSCHWANDTNER

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