

Volkswagen apologizes for emissions scandal at auto show

October 28 2015, by Yuri Kageyama



Herbert Diess, CEO of the Volkswagen Passenger Cars brand apologizes at the beginning of Volkswagen press conference in the media preview of the Tokyo Motor show in Tokyo, Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2015. Scandal-embattled Volkswagen's new chief executive has apologized at the Tokyo auto show and promises to win back customer trust. Diess, a recent hire from BMW, said Wednesday that the priority is to fix the problem, uncover what happened and make sure the scandal never happens again. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

A top Volkswagen executive Herbert Diess apologized at the Tokyo auto

show Wednesday for the automaker's emissions-cheating scandal, promising to win back customer trust, and said it will delay the launch of a diesel vehicle in Japan.

The head of VW's Japan division Sven Stein, who appeared at the VW booth before Diess, bowed for several seconds in a Japanese style of apology. Diess, who is chief executive of passenger cars at VW, made no bow.

"On behalf of my entire company, I'd like to apologize," said Diess, a recent hire from BMW, stressing that the priority is to fix the problem, uncover what happened and make sure the scandal never happens again.

Volkswagen is engulfed in a crisis after U.S. authorities found its [diesel vehicles](#) had software installed that allowed the cars to cheat emissions tests. On the road, the vehicles were in fact emitting pollutants at levels many times higher than advertised. The automaker faces recalls for millions of vehicles and punishing fines.

"We are doing everything we can to bring back this trust in our brand," said Diess.

He promised to "create a new and even better Volkswagen," rallying behind the principles of "innovation, responsibility and lasting value." Then Stein and Diess unveiled a plug-in hybrid [sport utility vehicle](#), pulling back a cloth covering a car on the stage.

Stein acknowledged after the presentation that sales in Japan had plummeted, more than by a third, although other factors besides the scandal, such as the lack of new models, compared to last year, may also be behind the plunge.



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The launch of a diesel model in Japan, which had been planned for the first quarter of next year, will be delayed until the second half, according to Volkswagen.

Although the vehicle does not have the same diesel engine involved in the scandal, Stein said he wanted to allay customer worries.

The Japanese market is dominated by powerful local manufacturers such as Toyota Motor Corp. and Honda Motor Co., but Volkswagen has done

relatively well compared with U.S. rivals. Volkswagen sells about 60,000 vehicles in Japan a year, with some 600,000 Volkswagen owners on the roads, according to VW.



Models stand next to Volkswagen cars in the media preview of the Tokyo Motor show in Tokyo, Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2015. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

In global vehicle sales, a closely watched indicator for an automaker's resonance with customers worldwide, VW had come out No. 1 in the first half of this year, beating Toyota. But after the first three quarters, Toyota was again on top. The [scandal](#) surfaced in September.

When asked if VW could be No. 1 again, Diess, who was besieged by reporters after his presentation, said that wasn't a priority and winning back trust was.

"Then we talk about market share," he said.



Herbert Diess, CEO of the Volkswagen Passenger Cars brand speaks on unveiled new Tiguan GTE at Volkswagen press conference in the media preview of the Tokyo Motor show in Tokyo, Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2015. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

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