

## [How Dieselgate saved Germany's car industry](#)

Ein Interview mit Herrn Prof. Hans-Liudger Dienel:  
**The scandal forced automakers to focus on electric vehicles**

By [Wolfgang Kerler](#)

This is North Korea minus the labor camps," Germany's premier magazine *Der Spiegel* wrote in 2013 to describe Volkswagen, the country's largest automaker. The statement referred to the way Martin Winterkorn, then-CEO of VW, was leading the company: no one dared to criticize his decisions, not even top executives. A climate of fear prevailed.

Winterkorn was convinced that diesel vehicles would be decisive for Volkswagen's success in the coming years. Under his leadership, VW wanted to significantly increase the market share of diesel in the US. It launched the now-infamous [clean diesel campaign](#) to boost sales numbers. Winterkorn didn't think much of electric vehicles, although Tesla was already selling its groundbreaking Model S. Too expensive, too little range, he said.

