

## FIVE QUESTIONS

*Uncovering the truth  
or just tactics?***Scrutinizing communications during a crisis.****Volkswagen always refers to the “diesel issue” –  
but isn’t that just whitewashing?**

The misconduct of certain individuals in this context is not compatible with our understanding of ourselves as a company. Everyone at Volkswagen is aware of this. However, the constant repetition of words like “scandal” would sweepingly discredit the hundreds of thousands of our employees who have nothing to do with this misconduct, and who are giving their best every day for Volkswagen and our customers.

**Why won’t Volkswagen admit  
that the company acted fraudulently?**

“Fraud” implies that the company willfully deceived customers and other stakeholders. So far there is nothing to suggest that this is the case. The fact is that we have disappointed our customers and the general public. And this is something we deeply regret.

**Why, in spite of the strong interest, have there been  
so few press conferences since the disclosure?**

The management has repeatedly faced the public. And the company’s press office staff answers every query as quickly and individually as possible. Press conferences are a format we choose for news that we consider worthwhile for journalists to travel to hear.

**Why does Volkswagen regularly withhold  
information, citing ongoing investigation?**

Statements not based on substantiated fact can’t restore lost trust. Providing legitimate, reliable information will only be possible after the ongoing, very costly, and complex investigations have been completed. This is something we have to take into account when communicating with the public.

**Why were the affected customers informed so late?**

Just a few days after September 18, 2015, customers could check online whether their vehicle was affected. Contacting them directly required us to have the current car ownership details from the registration or regulatory authorities. Thus only after measures were coordinated with the relevant agencies were we able to notify our customers personally.

**At first I simply couldn’t believe the reports.**

When the extent of the scandal was revealed, I was horrified that VW could cheat more or less legally and the legislator wasn’t doing anything about it. Our company could never allow such a thing. We keep our promises. I’m furious about this disparity. At the end of the day, their customers have been fooled because it doesn’t seem to matter whether or not they chose their vehicle based on emissions criteria. Our two “workhorses” are allegedly not affected by the scandal. Or at least I haven’t had mail from VW yet. But I can no longer truly trust the company. I also don’t understand why VW weren’t upfront about it and why they didn’t admit to it from the beginning. To proceed by awarding bonuses to board members does not look good to the general public. If VW had been honest straightaway and acknowledged the issues, they could have limited the damage. Ultimately many companies can build cars, and “made in Germany” used to be a quality seal. But people are forgetful. Maybe VW will be lucky.

*“They could have  
limited the damage.”*

**Inez Krüger, 51,** founded Inez Krüger Haustechnik, a company near Hanover which operates in the building services, sanitary facilities, and heating sector, in 1992. The business has always relied on Multivans with diesel engines. After the scandal, Krüger no longer trusts the manufacturer.

