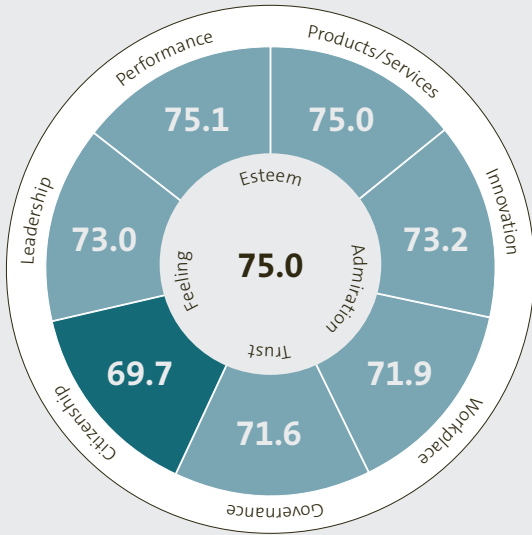


**DOWNWARD SLIDE**

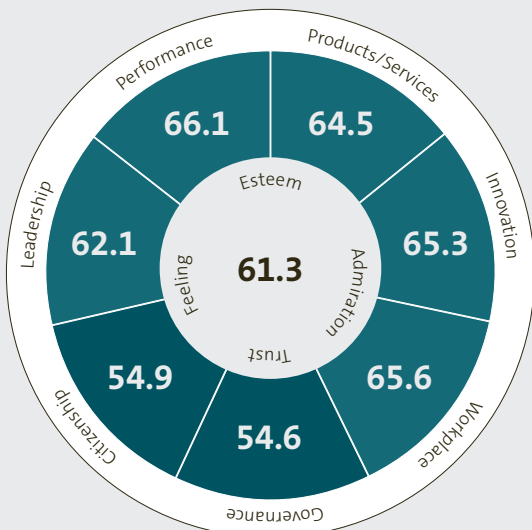
In the leading global reputation study, Global RepTrak 100, Volkswagen loses 13.7 points and slips to position 123 in 2016. The previous year, the company placed 14th in the rankings.

**VOLKSWAGEN 2015  
GLOBAL REPTRAK®  
Rank #14**



**-13.7**

**VOLKSWAGEN 2016  
GLOBAL REPTRAK®  
Rank #123**



**INTERVIEW**

*“You can’t demand trust.”*

**Advice from an internationally recognized brand expert.**

**Which is worse, the financial consequences of Dieselgate or the loss of customer trust?**

The fines and other charges are serious, but the reputation damage is much worse – and will also bring a heavy financial cost for the company. Trust is a valuable asset for a brand. Volkswagen always stood for reliability and quality, but now it looks as if they’ve been deliberately cheating their customers for years.

**But Volkswagen wants to restore that trust.**

Trust develops when companies keep their promises and act with integrity. It’s not something you can demand.

**How can Volkswagen make amends?**

The bonus debate certainly didn’t help. It’s still unclear what the active executives knew about Dieselgate. And letters to customers that read more like mobilization orders do more harm than good. Generous compensation payments, like those agreed in the US, make a better impression. VW should accommodate its German customers as well.

**But they don’t have comparable losses. Unlike in the US, their cars are already being converted and made legal in a government-ordered recall.**

It isn’t just a question of complying with the law, but of showing appreciation. The responsible executives don’t appear to have accepted this yet.

**Volkswagen is certifying to its customers that the update won’t compromise their vehicles’ performance.**

That’s not enough. VW simply has to do more than before if it wants to be seen as a company of integrity again. It needs on-road testing by independent inspectors, and it needs to install the best environmental technology and genuinely focus on its customers.



**Jürgen Gietl, 46,** is a father and lecturer and lives in a timber-framed house. He is a Managing Partner at Brand Trust in Nuremberg. He says: “To me, sustainability means appreciation.”