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Škoda Auto in flux



Škoda Auto had a disastrous year in [2021](#). Its sales were down 11.8% compared to [2020](#), during which its sales had already plummeted by 17.2%, to 785,000 cars. So Volkswagen promoted Škoda's chairman, Thomas Schäfer. A [year earlier](#) his predecessor, Bernhard Maier, had had the "most successful financial year in the history of Škoda Auto in many areas," so Volkswagen fired him. His predecessor, Winfried Vahland, totally missed his global sales target of [1.5m cars per year](#) and also the unmissable detail that an emissions-testing defeat device was a free accessory on some Škoda vehicles. So Volkswagen almost promoted him to head its North American operations. It didn't work out because of Dieselgate, but few Czechs were still paying attention. Now Volkswagen has fired its own chairman, Herbert Diess, just a few weeks after Škoda's new chairman, [Klaus Zellmer](#), took over. It will be interesting to see how Zellmer and his new boss at Volkswagen define success at Škoda.

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