

AUTOMOTIVE

## Volkswagen commits itself to 16 electric car facilities by 2022

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*Volkswagen's electric car production is set to grow in the next four years. Image credit: Porsche*

By DANNY PARISI

German automotive group Volkswagen is pledging itself to the proliferation of electric cars, with plans to have 16 production facilities around the world dedicated solely to the production of battery-powered vehicles by 2022.

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To help bolster this initiative, Volkswagen is teaming with a number of battery producers to create high-quality car batteries to power its electric vehicles, which will be forthcoming from many of its luxury brands including Porsche and Audi. The company's renewed commitment to electric cars and sustainability is notable given the high profile scandal in which the group was shown to be knowingly misrepresenting its vehicles' emissions.

"Over the last few months, we have pulled out all the stops to implement Roadmap E' with the necessary speed and determination," said Matthias Mller, CEO of **Volkswagen**, Berlin, Germany.

### Electric ambitions

Electric cars are gaining steam in the auto world as the reality of what constant carbon emissions are doing to the planet's atmosphere becomes clearer.

Volkswagen is positioning itself at the forefront of this movement with the announcement that it will dedicate considerable resources to expanding its production of electric cars over the next four years.



*The Audi e-tron. Image credit: Audi*

By 2022, the brand hopes to have 16 facilities worldwide dedicated solely to the production of electric vehicles.

Volkswagen has already ramped up production of electric cars and has recently announced a number of electric cars from its luxury brands.

Last week, the Volkswagen Group debuted a number of new electric vehicle initiatives at the Geneva International Motor Show including Audi e-tron, the Porsche Mission E and the I.D. VIZZION, another member of the Volkswagen I.D. family. Each of these luxury cars will be powered by electricity.

Beginning in 2019, the brand hopes to announce a new electric car "virtually every month," according to a statement.

#### Renewed effort

The decision is particularly notable given the brand's less-than-stellar recent reputation when it comes to issues of sustainability.

In 2015, it came to light that hundreds of thousands of diesel-powered VW vehicles sold in the United States were fitted with a "defeat device" that could sense when the car was being tested for emissions and would lower its output automatically. Once the car was back on the road and not under the scrutiny of regulators, it would emit up to 40 times more emissions than were allowed in the U.S., effectively allowing Volkswagen to sell cars that would never pass inspection in the U.S.

German automaker Audi has said that 2.1 million of its diesel-powered cars were outfitted with the software its parent company Volkswagen used to cheat emissions tests.

According to Reuters, 1.42 million of the vehicles sold in Europe include the faulty engine, while 13,000 were sold in the United States. Audi, as part of the Volkswagen Group, will have to regain a level of trust from consumers following this news ([see story](#)).



*Inside the Audi e-tron. Image credit: Audi*

The scandal severely fractured trust in the Volkswagen Group and its current commitment to electric vehicles can be seen as an attempt to win back some favor.

In other innovation news, Volkswagen's most recent attempts at modernizing its manufacturing process are focused on the design stage. Volkswagen Group is innovating its office culture by developing virtual reality technologies, including some behind-the-scenes tech built to streamline production meetings.

While VR has many uses in the consumer-facing field, Volkswagen and its partners, HTC Vive and tech startup Innoactive, have developed a new tool for designing the brand's automobiles that uses the innovative technology to put workers from different parts of the world in the same virtual room together. Volkswagen's tool debuted at Digitility, a tech conference in Germany ([see story](#)).

"We are financially robust and strategically well-positioned," said Mller. "Things are really moving and we have plans for much more."