



# RUDOLF DIESEL MEDAILLE

## Honour for the most successful innovation achievement for Prof. Dr. August-Wilhelm Scheer, publisher IM+io

Acceptance speech by the award winner

On 13 July 2023 in Augsburg, the Rudolf Diesel Medal, the oldest and most prestigious innovation award, was presented to Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. August-Wilhelm Scheer. He was honoured as a pioneer and entrepreneurial implementer of modern architectures for information systems. In his acceptance speech, he emphasised that true innovation can only be achieved with hard work and staying power.

Ladies and Gentlemen  
First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the jury, the decision-makers, the organizers - the German Institute for Inventions and the Rudolf Diesel Board of Trustees. This also applies to the laudatory speech by Professor Dieter Spath.

I congratulate the other winners and the nominees on their impressive achievements. It is a great honor for me to have received the Diesel Medal today.

I have studied Rudolf Diesel the person intensively and, among other things, read Horst Köhler's biography. I was extremely impressed by the tenacity with which Diesel pursued his idea over many years. He should be a role model for today's start-up founders who believe they can become millionaires from an idea virtually overnight. These narrow ideas with the hunt for quick success are, in my opinion, a major reason for the high failure rate of current start-ups.

Diesel, on the other hand, first had to legally enforce his patent for the diesel engine, then find companies willing to develop the engine to his design with many trials and setbacks, and then introduce his product to the market.

The way to my ARIS concept and product for business process optimization had taken more than 5 years from research, many publications and prototypes to the result. First approaches to process-oriented modeling of information systems can already be found in my book "EDV-orientierte Betriebswirtschaftslehre" from 1984. My ARIS-book, in which I developed the concept and meta model for business process modeling, was published in 1990. The first version of the ARIS-product was released in 1992.

It is my firm conviction that real innovations can only be achieved with hard work and perseverance. Such innovations are then characterized by a long life, as the diesel-principle still shows today. Even in the age of e-mobility and climate protection, the diesel engine is indispensable at least for supplying emergency power.

In a recently published market evaluation of the Gartner Group for products for process mining, the ARIS-PPM-product released by IDS Scheer in 2000 (after the sale of IDS Scheer AG to the company Software AG listed under the name of Software AG) together with two other German products, developed years later, is singled out as the world leader. I would like to claim that the two other products would also not occupy this place or even would not exist without our work. By the way, I am not aware of any other Gartner quadrant that is led by three German software products.

In addition to the persistence of the inventor, an idea must also come at the right time. If it comes too early, i.e. if there is no market demand yet, it will fail. If it comes too late, the market is already occupied by existing products.

Compared with the steam engine, the diesel engine was more efficient and therefore economically affordable even for medium-sized companies. So it came at the right time.

Our ARIS-concept and product met a great demand, because the business process organization was a paradigm shift from the functional enterprise organization and the success driver became the ERP enterprise software of SAP. To support this transformation, we had the right concept and the right product at the right time with ARIS. Therefore, a development and sales partnership with SAP was established.

In addition to persistence and the right timing, the third success factor is the development team. It has to be a small, dedicated community that sticks together with a sense of mission and a firm belief in success. Rudolf Diesel worked on the first version of his engine at MAN in Augsburg with only 2 or 3 employees. The ARIS development team also initially consisted of only a handful of highly qualified computer scientists under the leadership of Dr. Wolfram Jost. Most of them came from my university institute. The developers were therefore familiar with the subject matter and highly motivated. It is significant that the core group is still working together today, some 30 years later. The fourth factor for success was the need for initial customers and partners who were willing to follow the difficult path from an initial product version to a truly stable product. Rudolf Diesel had found partners like MAN and Krupp, as well as international customers who believed in him even in difficult situations. We were also able to convince and inspire committed initial customers such as Daimler and SAP of our approach.

The employees working with us were quasi virtual members of the development team. They motivated us, gave us new development ideas through their requirements and criticism, and became partners.

Looking back, the success factors were therefore:

1. Own conviction of the idea, coupled with persistence in development as well as missionary drive,
2. Congruence of the idea with an emerging market need, i.e. correct timing.
3. A conspiratorial (small) team of highly competent developers
4. Committed initial customers and partners who believe in the idea and support it through collaboration and patience.

I believe that these factors fundamentally apply to the success of innovations.

Rudolf Diesel's life story and success story are therefore still a valuable role model for the success of Germany as a location for innovation. ■



f.l.t.r. speaker of the board of Trustees Prof. Dr. Alexander J. Wurzer, Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. August-Wilhelm Scheer (Scheer GmbH) and laudator Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Dr. E.h. Dieter Spath.