



Inside PPS



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PPS remains family-run today, led by Joseph Fitzpatrick (Managing Director), Becky Fitzpatrick (Director) and Jamie Grainger (Commercial Director) -combining family ownership with experienced commercial leadership.

This article draws on conversations with Joseph, Becky and Jamie, alongside Dean Edwards, Operations Manager, who progressed from a driver role, and Freya Sapcote, HR Specialist, who supports PPS's people-first culture. Together, their perspectives show how PPS has evolved professionally without losing its family-run mindset.

Built to Last: How PPS is growing its team while staying true to its family-run roots

Founded in 1999, PPS is a Yorkshire-based, family-run business that has grown without private equity backing, short-term decision-making, or corporate gloss. Instead, its success has been built on long-standing relationships, a clear long-term vision, and a belief that sustainable growth starts with people.

Established by Becky & Jamie's parents and grandfather, PPS began in a small unit in Thorp Arch with no formal business plan or market research. Their grandfather went door-to-door selling, while their father, bringing over 20 years of experience in the paper industry, built supplier relationships and sourced products. And their mother ran everything office wise.

"There was no masterplan. It was energy, relationships, and a willingness to get out there and make it work."

That same relationship-led approach remains at the heart of the business today.

Competing with the corporates, without becoming one

As the sector has consolidated, many competitors have been acquired by national groups or private equity. PPS has taken a different route, choosing to remain independent and compete directly with much larger organisations.

"Being family-run allows us to take a long-term view. We don't make decisions quarter-to-quarter."

That independence has enabled PPS to win major public sector tenders and continue growing without sacrificing its values. Instead of competing purely on price, PPS focuses on quality, service, and long-term partnerships.

"Our value proposition is not purely price – it's service, trust and relationships. Our goal is to be in partnership with our customers."

Service delivered by people, not processes

Customer service at PPS is not confined to one department. It's embedded across the entire business, from the customer service team to the drivers who represent PPS face-to-face every day.

"Our drivers are often the PPS team members our customers see most frequently. That matters."

Rather than driving efficiency by reducing delivery time, PPS deliberately builds in time for consistency and care.

"Efficiency doesn't always mean better. We'd rather get it right than rush."

This approach reflects a wider philosophy: grow carefully, protect quality, and prioritise relationships.

Developing people from within

As PPS grows, developing people internally is viewed as a strategy, not a by-product. While the business operates with a flat structure, it actively creates opportunities for progression, responsibility, and development.

"We sit people down and ask them what they actually want, rather than making assumptions."

One of the clearest examples of this approach is Dean's journey within the business.

Dean joined PPS as a driver and spent several years in the role. While he enjoyed the work, he had previous management experience and wanted to be more involved. After an open conversation with leadership, PPS began investing in his development - even though no operational role was immediately available.

"They trained me even when there wasn't a role there. When the opportunity came up, I was ready."

That investment paid off. Dean progressed into an assistant operational role before stepping into a full Operations Manager position, where he now plays a key role in running the site.

"That kind of progression doesn't happen often. It only works when a business genuinely listens and backs its people."

Importantly, progression at PPS doesn't always mean moving 'up'. Employees are encouraged to develop sideways, take ownership of projects, and expand their responsibilities without being pushed into roles they don't want.

"Development doesn't have to mean a title change. Trust and responsibility matter just as much."

A culture backed by trust and HR support

Supporting this culture is an HR approach that is embedded in the business rather than operating at arm's length.

Freya joined PPS as an HR Assistant and progressed into a HR Specialist role within two years. Despite being a lean, one-person HR function, she works closely with senior leadership and is trusted as the subject-matter expert.

"You're independent, but you're never on your own," she explains. "The leadership team trust me to advise them, and that makes a huge difference."

Rather than being viewed as a compliance function, HR at PPS is approachable, visible, and closely connected to the day-to-day realities of the business.

"People don't avoid HR here. Everyone talks to each other, and issues get dealt with properly."

Development, Freya explains, isn't limited by job titles or structure.

"Even in a role like mine, the investment in development has been incredible. You're encouraged to shape your role, not just sit in it."

Growing the team, carefully and intentionally

With clear growth plans for the next five years, PPS recognises that bringing new people into the business is essential, but only if those hires strengthen the culture that already exists.

Rather than recruiting solely on industry background, PPS focuses on transferable skills, values, and mindset.

"You can teach products and processes. You can't teach personality."

To support this phase of growth, PPS has partnered with Jackson Hogg, a company that understands family-run, people-led businesses, helping to identify individuals who want long-term careers rather than short-term roles. The aim is not rapid headcount growth but building the right team to support the business sustainably.

Transparency, Trust and Accountability

Open communication underpins daily life at PPS. Quarterly town halls, skip-level 1-1's, and visible leadership ensure people understand not just where the business is going - but why.

"We talk about what's going well and what isn't. That's where accountability comes from."

Feedback is delivered directly and constructively, creating clarity rather than politics.

"Avoiding difficult conversations helps no one."

Using technology without losing the human touch

PPS is investing in AI and technology with a clear intention: to support people, not replace them.

"AI should give people time back. The human side of customer service is becoming more important, not less."

By using technology to streamline reporting, improve product knowledge and support decision-making, PPS enables teams to focus more time on customers and relationships.

Looking ahead

With ambitious but measured growth targets, PPS remains focused on

- Investing in people development
- Strengthening brand identity
- Rationalising product ranges to focus on what it does best
- Recruiting thoughtfully to support long-term goals

"We don't need to do everything. We need to do the right thing well."

Growing the right way

In a market increasingly driven by short-term returns, PPS stands out by staying true to its roots. Its independence allows it to grow responsibly, invest in people, and build the kind of culture that supports long-term success.

Through internal development, transparent leadership, and carefully considered recruitment, PPS continues to prove that growth doesn't have to come at the expense of values.

For PPS, building the right team isn't a recruitment campaign, it's how the business has always grown.



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