

DP&A

David Poole set up his direct-marketing agency DP&A in 1995. By 1999 turnover was £25.1 million, profit £349,000 and cash reserves totalled £1.2 million. Although it ranks 15th in its industry, it is



still a small player compared with the top five. Dan Douglas, creative director, and Tony Appi, commercial director, each own 20 per cent but David Poole maintains 60 per cent. He wants to expand rapidly but a newspaper article on the firm highlighted the issue of control. Here are some quotes from David Poole:

I have got to do things my way and prove I've got what it takes ... I love my business and find it massively stimulating, but I guess it all boils down to ego. I haven't spent a lot of time on strategic planning I have an open and honest relationship with my fellow directors, but they haven't yet been involved in strategic planning. I don't want to distract them from their core work. I'm capable of taking the decisions myself....A venture capitalist will have a strategy that is not necessarily in line with the best interests of the company and will always be looking towards a profitable exit, so effectively I would not be in charge.

[Going to the stock market] would give access to funding for development and provided I continued to perform well then I would keep control [but] quite simply we are too small.

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Case question:

What insights do David Poole's comments give you into his views, priorities and personality?