

Pridex aims to lead kitchen market

A Palmerston North company is working on its national ambitions by heading south

Pridex Kitchens is expanding into the South Island, adding \$3 million to the Palmerston North company's annual turnover. The kitchen manufacturer has acquired the business operations of Christchurch-based Fox Kitchens and six South Island showrooms.

They will be rebranded as Pridex showrooms, creating a unified national brand.

The move makes Pridex the most extensive kitchen manufacturer in New Zealand, said managing director Steve Chaning-Pearce. It should also ensure there is enough work for the Palmerston North company to use its manufacturing equipment on a second daily shift. The arrangement is expected to bring more jobs to Manawatu.



There are plans to move some manufacturing from Christchurch to Palmerston North, but the business will have a strong presence in both the North and South Island.

"We want to lead the New Zealand kitchen market," Mr Chaning-Pearce said. "If things go according to plan in the next five years we'll have between 300 and 400 employees in Palmerston North."

The company has grown in recent years to employ 60 people. Pridex is also preparing to spend about \$2 million on buying new equipment.

The firm dipped its "toe in the water" by buying a \$250,000 nesting machine that brings sawing and two drilling operations into one process, Mr Chaning-Pearce said.

The headquarters will be in Palmerston North, but national marketing and sales will be run from Christchurch. A national identity will bring benefits in terms of advertising, brand acceptance and customer loyalty, Mr Chaning-Pearce said.

Creating a national franchise also makes an Australasian franchise possible in the future, he said.

Fox Kitchens directors Bruce Cameron and Matt Brewster will join Pridex as marketing director and sales director respectively. "Our short-term goal is to establish a further 12 franchisees in the North Island," Mr Cameron told the Manawatu Standard.