

# Takeover start of sales lift

By JANINE RANKIN

PALMERSTON North kitchen and joinery firm Pridex Industries has just increased in size by more than 60 percent with the purchase of Origin Office Furniture.

Managing director Chris Prier said a total \$3 million investment in property and new equipment to be installed over Christmas put Pridex on track for a planned four-fold increase in sales over the next three to five years.

Origin's directors become part of the Pridex management team and all 19 staff retain their jobs as the manufacturer consolidates at the Pridex factory at Railway Road, with plans for further expansion on the site.

Mr Prier said he believed the, "smart mix of investment in technology and people", would enable huge growth despite forecasts of a slowing national economy.

"It secures another manufacturing base in Manawatu, and secures employment for local people."

With a total of more than 70 staff, the business will be looking for more workers, especially joiners, next year.

"There is a skills shortage, and we have employed a few people from offshore to meet that. We also have a fairly intensive apprenticeship project with more than eight apprentices in the last few years. We very much believe in growing our own."

Mr Prier believed Pridex's expansion into the commercial office furniture, development of more national rather than regional supply agreements, and more kitchen franchises would develop a bigger market for Pridex products.