

City investors accelerate kitchen company's growth

By JOHN MYERS

CITY-based Pridex Kitchens has signed up investment finance to capitalise on its new factory and is launching a growth programme to boost output and triple staff.

Managing director Chris Prier said the plan is to put the Pridex brand across New Zealand, through franchised agencies, in two to five years.

The private investment by a group of four city business people, led by Steve Channing-Pearce, a director of New Zealand Pharmaceuticals, is positioning the Railway Road company to achieve growth which would otherwise take three times as long.

Pridex has just moved to the new site. Its former home in Rangitikei Street is

being remodelled for Robertson Motors, while Robertson's former Rangitikei Street site is being redeveloped as a shopping centre.

Mr Prier said the Pridex plan was for expansion of automated manufacturing — further computer-driven equipment is due to arrive on site shortly and more is to be ordered — a scaling up of management strength and growth of franchised agencies.

Pridex has two franchise operations — a showroom in Wellington and an agency in Kapiti.

Two senior management positions, production manager and operations manager, are being advertised, to handle the factory's day-to-day running.

Mr Prier said those positions would allow him, as managing director, to

concentrate more closely on company growth.

He said he was not too concerned about the stressed market for skilled tradespeople.

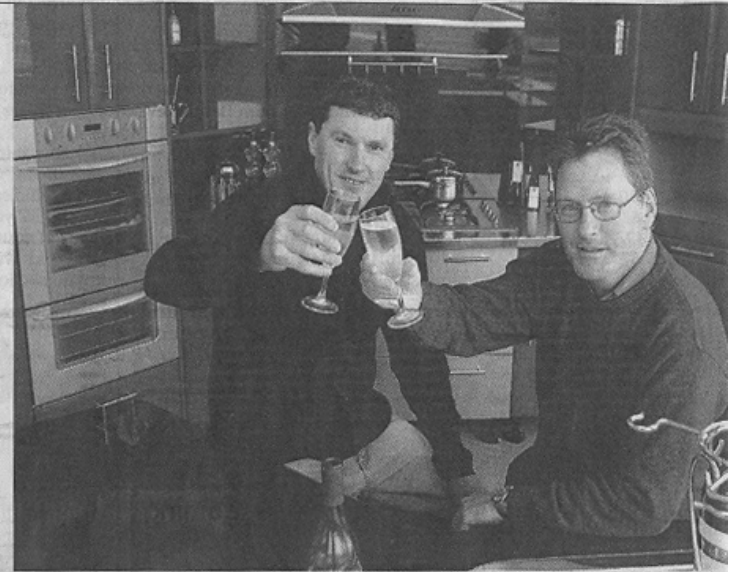
"There's only one way to handle that: In-depth training," he said.

Pridex had been committed to an internal trade skills training programme for the past five years, and in that time had put about eight people through apprenticeships.

Most of them were still with Pridex, Mr Prier said.

"We lead the local field in technology, and we're investing heavily in automation," he said.

■ See more about Pridex this week in InBusiness.



TOASTING a bright future in Pridex Kitchens' showroom are managing director Chris Prier and investment group leader Steve Channing-Pearce.

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