



SUBLIMATION QUICK STOP WITH MATT & KEVIN

By Matt Woodhouse & Kevin Lumberg

Industry Support

The best way to judge any industry is the support offered. In the world of sublimation, support is a big component of the service the manufacturers and distributors provide. We will examine the support arm of sublimation in general, plus two specific services available—The Full Color Network and Unisubgraphics.com.

THE SUBLIMATION NETWORK

The Sublimation Network is a not-for-profit group consisting of the major manufacturers and distributors in the sublimation industry. They have joined forces in a consortium to work collectively to advance the sublimation industry. The TSN group has a website: www.getsublimation.com (see Figure 1). From this site, a fairly comprehensive overview of the sublimation industry can be obtained.

The first component simply gives a plain English description of what the technology is all about, and a good (but not complete) list of the items that can be decorated.

The second component is an in-depth synopsis of the financial opportunities the technology can afford. From basic pricing information to a more detailed profit and loss statement, this section will help identify if the dollars make sense for your business.

The third aspect of TSN is education. A great technology is only as good as the training and service offered with it. The TSN education link will show what training sessions are being offered, primarily via the Project Sublimation training seminar forum. Project Sublimation offers a two-day hands-on training event that is extremely detailed, and success oriented. More information on Project Sublimation can be found at www.projectsublimation.com.

The fourth component of TSN will bridge us to our next topic—The Full Color Network.

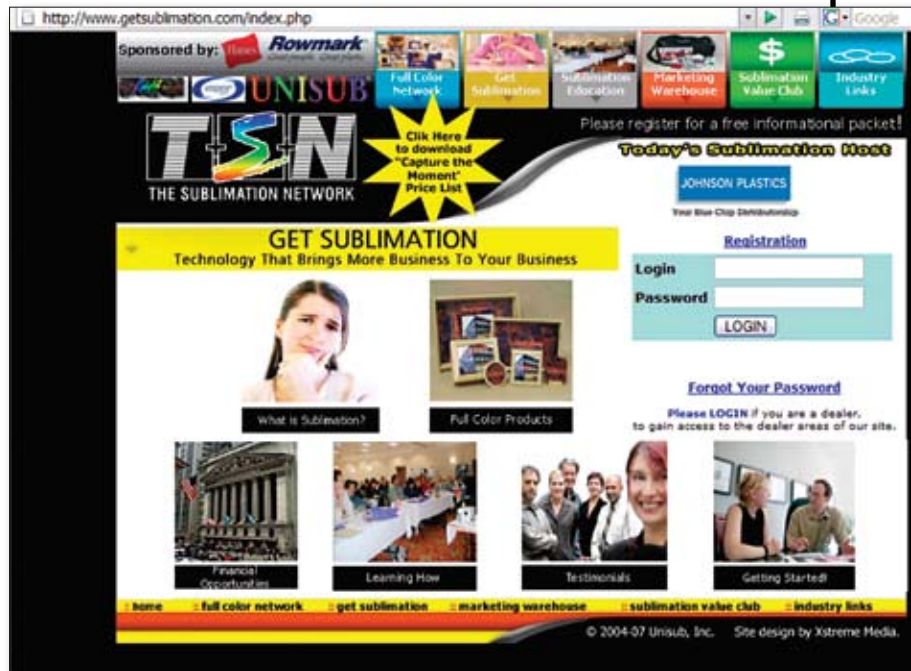


Figure 1

THE FULL COLOR NETWORK

The Full Color Network, or FCN, is a powerful advertising tool that can direct web traffic to your business. Anyone who has attempted to navigate the very difficult process of getting their website listed in the pay-per-click section on Google or other search engines knows how cumbersome such a task can be. Those who have been willing to pay the most to be sponsors, or who have been getting a large number of clicks typically move to the top of the list. How is it possible for a

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Figure 2



Figure 3

small business to compete with companies such as Wal-Mart or Shutterbug for search engine ad space? That is what the Full Color Network is all about.

FCN provides an opportunity to work collectively with other sublimation decorators to pool resources to achieve greater results. It also allows hundreds of products to be presented to the end user before the decorators have even had their first interaction with the customer. The small enrollment price (\$49.95 for the first year) is pooled from all the businesses that participate, to purchase high-ranking listings on the major search engines.

FCN has its primary component, the website (see Figure 2). Simply go to www.fullcolornetwork.com to see what this is all about. The FCN site features hundreds of items in an unbranded fashion, without sizing or pricing being listed. The most valuable component of the website is a dealer locator. An end user simply needs to enter their zip code, and a search radius they are willing to travel within. The website will then give them a list of business contacts in their area that can provide the products they are looking for.

The second component is the dealer website. The FCN has a site that looks identical to its primary site that people would find on Google, except it has no dealer locator. What this is all about is saving a dealer from the time and expense of hosting sublimated products on their site. Those who have a website know what painstaking measures need to be taken to get pictures shot of the various products. The time to upload the images, and the hosting fees required can make having hundreds of products listed on individual websites very expensive. The TSN dealer site is designed to help a decorator present sublimated products on their website, without all the expenses. All a FCN member needs to do is put a link on their site. That link will send a viewer to the dealer site and allow them to see examples of sublimated products.

The third facet of the Full Color Network is a catalog. Once again, something that is very expensive for most companies to produce has been done by FCN. The catalog titled "Capture the Moment"

is nearly identical to the FCN website. This allows for a consistent presentation of sublimated products between web formats and a printed catalog. The Capture the Moment catalog features 32 pages of unbranded products. All that is left is to develop a companion price list and now you have a catalog to present to your customers!

UNISUBGRAPHICS.COM

The question has been asked many, many times, "Where do I find really good-looking graphics to sublimate?" While there are a variety of sources for artwork, there is only one that was specifically designed for sublimation. Unisubgraphics.com was designed for sublimation decorators to find thousands of graphics already on templates (see Figure 3) for the hundreds of products available.

The art collection is continually growing, and consists of thousands of high-resolution images themed from business use, to sports teams, and even seasonal art. It is all royalty free, able to be downloaded and saved for future use, and most images will allow text to be altered. So customizing a stock graphic can be as simple as changing some text!

Another nice feature is the "Quick Tips of the Moment" section. Each month, there are new tips and tricks to be used in Photoshop and Corel, as well as tips for pressing specific products. This month, there are very clever tips for pressing keepsake box lids; plaques; and ChromaLuxe® easel-back products. This is just one more great section from this very useful product.

In addition to being organized by channel (i.e.: sports teams) it is also organized by holiday, special events, and even activities like elections! Six to eight weeks in advance of a holiday or event like graduation, Unisubgraphics members will receive an email with newly created graphics just for that special period. You want great art for a specific product for a specific customer or event? You got it. Just go to www.UnisubGraphics.com.

Artwork can be purchased either ala carte for \$5 each, or you can subscribe for unlimited downloads for \$49.95.

THE FULL MEAL DEAL

From now through the end of the year, The Sublimation Network is offering a very special promotion. If you sign up for Unisubgraphics.com for a year (only \$49.95) you immediately become a member of the Full Color Network, listing your business and linking your email and website to the "searching" end customer. That's both great programs for less than fifty bucks. Just go to www.Unisubgraphics.com and click on "Register." It's that easy.

While these services are not quite free, it is one of the least expensive advertising methods we have heard of. And with so much artwork available, this is one great value.

In short, the sublimation industry offers many innovative tools to help the business involved in the process succeed. The Sublimation Network offers information on the process, financial opportunities and educational events, and the Full Color Network will help steer business to you. In addition, the Unisubgraphics.com site offers so much additional value with many high-quality graphics to save you time and ultimately make you more money. Please take advantage of the many tools and opportunities the industry offers!

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