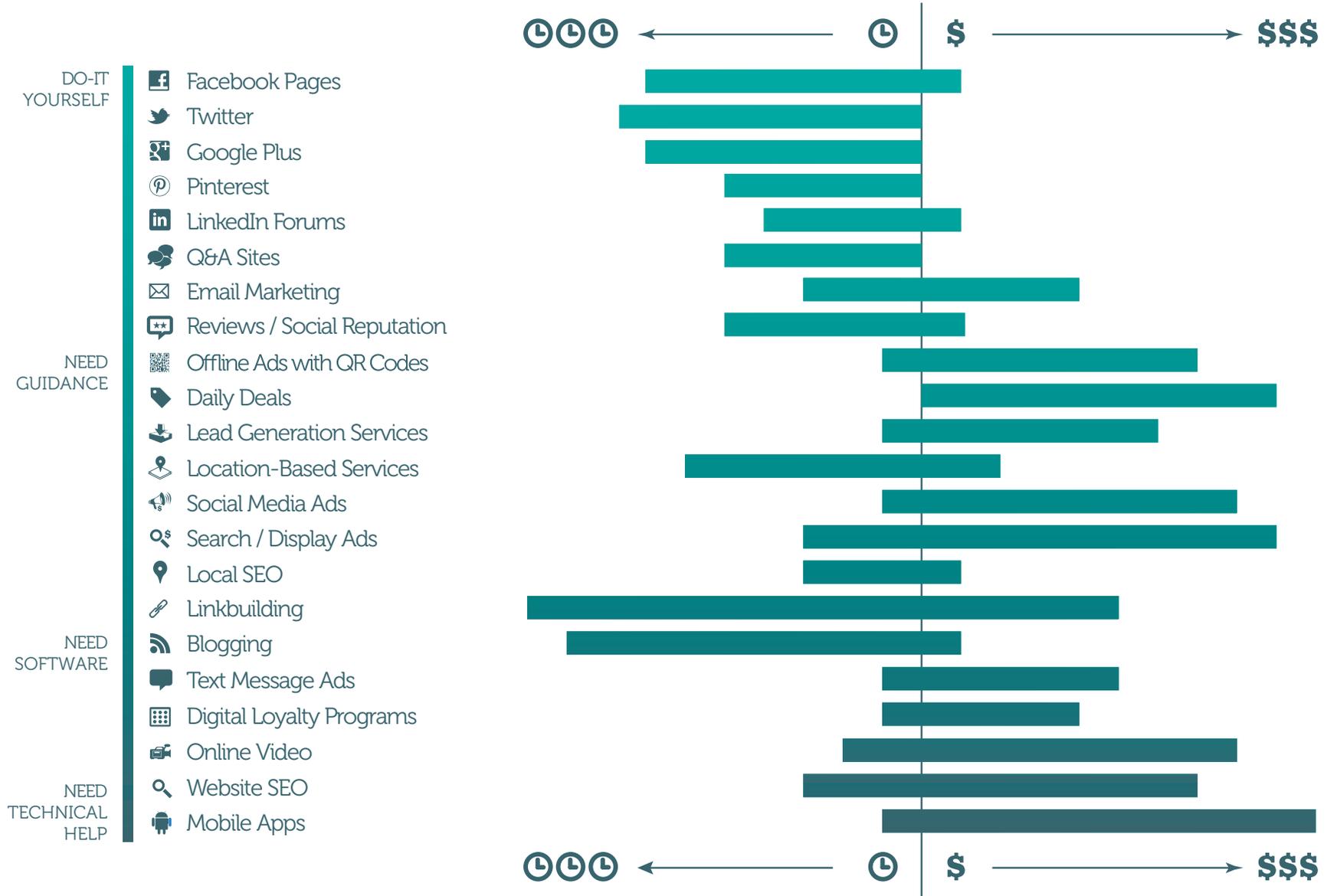


# Which Digital Marketing Options Best Fit My Business?



**Legend**

- Little or no time
- Relatively little time
- Moderately time-intensive
- Time-intensive

- Free or very low cost
- Relatively low cost
- Relatively moderate cost
- Relatively high cost

## Facebook Pages

Facebook Pages offer an easy way to get a conversation going with your customers, improve loyalty, ask for feedback, and build community. Successful business Pages on Facebook require frequent monitoring and content updates.

## Twitter

You can think of Twitter as a kind of public-email-listserv for the web. Depending on the type of business you operate, you might use Twitter to announce new products, chat about news items in your industry, or offer discounts. Depending on your industry, you might see success with minutes a day, or it might take hours.

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## Google Plus

Plus is a new social network from Google. It's sort of a hybrid between Facebook and Twitter, allowing for group conversations with some of your techier customers and prospects.

## Pinterest

Pinterest is a digital bulletin board--a highly visual way for people to share interesting content they come across online. It's a lighter version of a Facebook wall, with lower follower expectations of update frequency.

## LinkedIn Forums

LinkedIn is the largest social business network. Developing a strong reputation by answering questions in certain forums like insurance, banking, or consulting may pay off for your business. LinkedIn charges a small subscription fee for optional Pro accounts which give you additional intelligence about other users.

## Q&A Sites

A number of sites offer opportunities to answer questions for prospects; some of the best known of these include Quora and Yahoo Answers. Industry-specific examples include Avvo and Travellr. These sites don't require any set amount of time, but the more questions you answer the faster you'll build your reputation.

## Email Marketing

Providers like Constant Contact, Vertical Response, and Exact Target offer the ability to maintain your email lists and send branded emails at a reasonable price. It probably won't bring you a ton of new business, but few strategies can match email to build existing customer loyalty.

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## Reviews / Social Reputation

Customer reviews play a role in your local search engine rankings, but more importantly, they influence whether customers ultimately choose to contact your business. Encourage customers to review you as part of your regular point-of-sale or follow-up process; a handful of web companies like CustomerLobby or Reputation.com can also help.

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## Offline Ads w/QR Codes

A bridge between the offline and digital worlds, QR codes allow smartphone owners to scan them and be directed to a webpage that contains more information about the product or service being advertised. A number of websites offer free QR code generators, but there's obviously cost involved to purchase the ads themselves.

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## Daily Deals

Daily deal offerings like Groupon, LivingSocial, and Google Offers offer merchants the promise of guaranteed customers--at a high price. Third-party guidance is recommended to protect against dissatisfied customers or huge financial losses.

## Lead Generation Services

Online lead generation companies like Thumbtack, ServiceMagic, and RedBeacon offer guaranteed customers--if you're able to sell them after their initial request. Some sites charge a membership fee; others take a percentage of the contract amount.

## Location-Based Services

Location-based services like Foursquare and Facebook Places give you the ability to learn a lot about your customers...if you have time to analyze the data. Offering specials (usually small dollar-value) can bring in new customers from these services as well.

## Social Media Ads

Ads on Facebook and LinkedIn are easy to set up on your own. You can target demographic, geographic & even interest-based ads at reasonable prices. Some guidance is still recommended to ensure the best use of your ad dollars.

## Search / Display Ads

Paid advertising programs such as Google Adwords and Microsoft AdCenter in which businesses are charged a fee when a searcher clicks on their advertisement. Sometimes called "PPC" or mistakenly called "SEM." Guidance recommended to ensure advertising dollars are spent wisely.

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## Local SEO

Optimizing your local business listings like Google Places, Bing Business Portal, and Yelp is one of the most time-effective and cost-effective digital marketing opportunities for small businesses. Start at GetListed.org!

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## Linkbuilding

Linkbuilding is a key component of traditional SEO. When done well, it's one of the most successful long-term strategies on this list. It's also one of the hardest and most time-intensive to execute, and often requires help from a professional agency.

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## Blogging

Blogging is a great way to demonstrate your expertise to, and build relationships with prospects, peers, and your existing customers. It can give a big boost to your SEO but requires a significant time commitment.

## Text Message Ads

Like email, text message ads probably aren't going to bring you much in the way of new business, but services like Fanminder and 4info can help you keep existing customers who have opted-in to receive your messages coming back.

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## Digital Loyalty Programs

Loyalty cards are rapidly going digital, with companies like Punchd (now owned by Google), the Bing Business Portal, and Punchcard, offering easy-to-manage loyalty programs for your customers with smartphones.

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## Online Video

Video is a fantastic way to engage with prospects --both on your website and search engines like YouTube and Vimeo. There are some exceptions, but video production is usually tough to do in-house, and companies like TurnHere and Spotzer aren't terribly cheap.

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## Website SEO

On-page SEO--making your site more visible in the search engines for keywords related to what you sell--is something that can usually be accomplished fairly quickly by a professional, but usually requires technical knowledge. And without linkbuilding, simply adjusting your code may only have a limited effect.

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## Mobile Apps

Most small businesses probably don't need to develop their own app--or even have anything beyond a basic mobile website. But in certain high-value, high-visual industries like interior design, homebuilding, or finance, developing your own app might make sense as a customer recruitment tool.

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