

FREE CHECKLIST

Admin Panel Feature Checklist

12 features every internal tool should have — score what you have, find what you're missing.

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seattle.dev/downloads/admin-panel-feature-checklist.pdf

Admin Panel Feature Checklist

Internal admin panels fail for predictable reasons — they're built for the developer's mental model instead of the user's workflow. Score your current tool (or your spec for a new one) against the 12 features below. Each one prevents a specific, common class of frustration.

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Score yourself

For each feature: ✓ Have it (works well) · ● Partial · ✕ Missing. Count your ✓s at the bottom.

- ☐ Global search across all records (instant, partial-match, typo-tolerant)
- ☐ Bulk operations (select multiple records, batch update, batch export)
- ☐ Comprehensive audit trail (who did what, when, with before/after values)
- ☐ Role-based access control (granular, not just admin/user)
- ☐ Inline editing (no navigate-to-edit-screen round trips)
- ☐ Keyboard shortcuts for common actions
- ☐ Customizable filters and saved views per user
- ☐ Data export (CSV/Excel) without engineering help
- ☐ Import with validation preview (catch errors before commit)
- ☐ Activity log per record (recent changes shown inline)
- ☐ Bulk-import undo / rollback within 24 hours
- ☐ Empty-state guidance (clear next-step when there's no data yet)

Your score: / 12

What "good" looks like

Feature	What separates "have it" from "kinda have it"
Global search	Returns results in <200ms, handles partial matches and typos, searches across all major record types from a single box.
Bulk operations	Selection persists across pagination. Filter → select all → batch action works on thousands of records.
Audit trail	Shows who, when, what changed. Old values preserved. Filterable. Not just logs in a separate page.
Role-based access	Granular (per-action, per-record-type). Not just "admin vs user." Maps to your real org structure.

Inline editing	Edit fields without leaving the list view. Saves on blur or explicit save. Doesn't reload the whole page.
Keyboard shortcuts	Common actions (search, new, save, navigate) accessible from keyboard. Power users get productive fast.
Customizable filters	Save filter combos per user. Remember sort/filter state across sessions.
Data export	CSV/Excel export without filing a ticket. Respects current filters. Large exports don't time out.
Import with preview	Upload file → see validation errors before committing → fix → commit. Not "upload and hope."
Activity log per record	Recent changes visible on the record itself, not in a separate audit screen.
Bulk-import undo	24-hour window to roll back a bad import. Tested, not theoretical.
Empty-state guidance	First-time view shows clear next-step ("Click here to add your first X"), not just an empty table.

Priority by team size

Team size	Must-haves	Nice-to-haves
2–5 users	Search, audit trail, RBAC, data export	Bulk operations, custom filters
5–20 users	Add inline editing, import with preview, activity log	Keyboard shortcuts, bulk-import undo
20+ users	Add bulk operations, customizable filters, empty-state guidance	Most things should already be in place

SCORE INTERPRETATION

10–12 ✓: Solid foundation. Focus on the gaps.

6–9 ✓: Functional but painful. Each missing feature is a daily friction point for your team.

<6 ✓: The tool is costing you more in lost productivity than you'd save by replacing it. Worth a custom build conversation.

BUILDING A NEW ADMIN PANEL?

If your score came back low and you're considering building rather than buying, I'd love to hear what you're trying to solve. Free 30-minute consultation, no pitch — just honest feedback on whether custom is the right move.

seattle.dev/schedule-consultation