RESEARCHERS IN PROFILE

Zahra Noorani

Where are you from and where/what did you study?
I was born in Karachi, Pakistan but have lived the majority of my life here. I completed my B.A. in Economics at McMaster University and then came to Ryerson University for my B.Comm in Hospitality and Tourism Management.

How did you become a student researcher at HTMResearch?
I started working as a Research Assistant for Dr. Chris Gibbs after completing my 3rd year. I loved it so much I stayed involved in research until I graduated.

What did you enjoy most about conducting research?
I enjoyed collecting and analysing the data we collected most. I was able to apply what I had learned in the research courses we took in HTM.

What does the Institute of Hospitality and Tourism Research mean to you?
It means opportunity and exploring to me. I was able to explore so many different parts of the industry, in ways I never had in the classroom. It was an opportunity that opened up many other doors for me.

What are you doing right now?
Currently I work in Business Development at Ontario Place.

How does having a research background help with what you are doing?
My research background helps me everyday. I’m often looking for best practices or supporting data for a new idea we want to implement. My research background has helped to grow my analytical skills as well as interpreting information, which has enabled me to work on assignments outside of my job description and make an impact on some of the strategic decision making we have to do.

What studies have you worked on at HTMRsearch?
I worked with Dr. Chris Gibbs on a few things, particularly on Responsive Web Design and how the hospitality industry has adapted to the mobile consumer. We worked on a paper that was published last year – "Innovation – Related Organizational Decision-Making The Case of Responsive Web Design." I worked with Dr. Rachel Dodds on green festivals research as well as focus groups with HTM students to understand their attitudes towards research.

If you could give one piece of advice to students who are interested in conducting research at HTMRsearch, what would it be?
Get involved early and explore as many things as you can in research. Get down and dirty and work on a waste audit, or visit festivals to collect surveys. Every experience you have will contribute to making you a better researcher, student or whatever it is you choose to do next.