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**ANALYSIS OF THE SYSTEM OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF  
TOURIST SUPPORT SPECIALISTS IN UKRAINE**

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**Abstract.** In this paper it is stated that the gap between the existing system of professional development of personnel and the real needs of tourist establishments in Ukraine is a major problem in tourism industry. The main problems of professional development are the lack of programs aimed at updating practical knowledge and skills needed in the tourism business; the absence of teachers who have experience in tourism and high theoretical and methodological special, as well as pedagogical training. The paper also presents some theoretical aspects of organization of training and retraining of tourist support specialists in Ukraine, as well as a generalized brief analysis of the programs of training and retraining of guides in Ukraine, including an example of one typical program of training and retraining of tourist support specialists (guides) in one of the regions of Ukraine.

**Keywords:** tour guide, tourist support specialists, training of specialists, continuing education courses.

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## **Introduction.**

Currently, almost all over the world, tourist institutions feel the need for professional tour guides. Changes in the sociocultural sphere require experts in the field of excursion to have great plasticity, the capability of mobile reorientation within the profession with minimal adaptation time.

Specialists in the field of excursion must not only acquire theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the field of creation and conduct of excursions, but also to acquire a complex of broad professional skills in the field of the most effective social technologies.

Introduction of new subjects at all levels of continuous tourism educations of particular importance for improving the qualification and professional retraining of specialists in tourist support (guides), in the development of interests, inclinations, motives for choosing a profession, gaining experience of excursion activities.

The gap between the existing system of professional development of personnel and the real needs of tourist establishments in Ukraine is a major problem in tourism industry. The main problems of professional development are the lack of programs aimed at updating practical knowledge and skills needed in the tourism business; the absence of teachers who have experience in tourism and high theoretical and methodological special, as well as pedagogical training.

To determine the content of the programs of professional development of guides, it is necessary to analyze: what the current normative bases of advanced training in the education system in tourism are; what is needed to ensure the quality work of the guide, and what the content of the training courses in Ukraine is.

We believe that any program of study courses for guides should provide a solid basis for obtaining and improving the professional knowledge of the guide, to allow organic connection with the excursion activity, general tourist, recreational, cultural, historical, psychological and pedagogical knowledge that will allow the tourist support

specialists to combine both the direct work of the guide in the tours, and the work of the tour organizer.

### **1. Problems and prospects of the excursion tourist services market in Ukraine**

In today's context, the tourist services market is a large and well-developed branch of the economy. In the entire tourism industry, the first place is given to tourism services. Elements of the tourist services market include establishments and enterprises aimed at meeting the needs of tourists (comfort, content, attraction, and others). In general, the tourist services market is considered to be an inter-sectoral economic complex, which is based on the creation of a tourism product that meets the needs of the population [3].

In the last decade, there has been a lot of positive things in the field of excursion tourism services [1]:

- understanding of the importance and need for joint discussion of development of excursion tourism services has been reached at all levels, including media, as well as the need for creation of a modern tourism industry in the country, which is one of the priority sectors of the economy, since it has a significant multiplied effect and stimulates the development of related industries;

- positive practices of state regulation in the sphere of tourist services, in terms of using an effective mechanism for attracting investment in tourism, based on public-private partnership, the formation of a civilized market for excursion tourism services, including the implementing of legal rules aimed at protection of the rights and legitimate interests of consumers of excursion tourism product, quality and safety of these services, implementation of new standards and classification of tourism industry objects, new information technologies, creating regional tourism development programs;

- legal normative documents that form the basis for civilized market for excursion tourist services in our country have been adopted.

At the same time, factors of both objective and subjective nature continue to affect the current state and further development of the excursion tourist services market.

Development of domestic tourism will undoubtedly have a significant impact on development of international tourism and its services market. Forecasts for the next decade show that the leading role in tourism will belong to countries such as China, USA, France, Spain, Italy, United Kingdom, Turkey, Egypt [4; 10].

The underdevelopment of inbound tourism, in turn, will lead to the fact that the resource base of domestic cultural excursion tourism in Ukraine will be used by only 10 – 15% of its potential. Also, in the field of domestic tourism there will be no complete commodity-money exchange as a basis for economic development of this industry. The main reason and answer to the question: ‘Why do Ukrainian citizens not want to vacation in their home country or travel so little?’ – is low wages of the main part of the population and insufficient level of material well-being of the mass consumer, especially the elderly, i.e. pensioners. High prices of rail and air travel do not allow long trips in our country. These factors significantly reduce the demand for excursion and tourist services [2].

The development of excursion tourism services is hampered by a small proportion of domestic tourist companies represented at international exhibitions. This creates another problem — insufficient promotion of domestic excursion and tourism product in the domestic market. It should be noted that Ukrainian tourism enterprises find it difficult to compete in promoting their product in the global tourism market, while their western competitors enjoy numerous tax and foreign economic benefits, which Ukrainian enterprises and organizations are deprived of.

The most significant problems that require the formation of a complex of state support measures in the regions also include [5]:

- insufficient investment in the development of regional tourism infrastructure;
- insufficiently active promotion of the excursion tourist product in the regions with excellent potential and natural base for the development of excursion tourism;

- problems in training and advanced training of personnel in the field of tourist support services in Ukraine and these problems are more complicated than just a shortage of graduates.

Training and retraining, as well as professional development of staff in the field of tourist support services can be one of the main advantages of tourism market development, because the quality of services provided depends directly on the skills of the staff, and the satisfaction of guests in the service sector is achieved due to the efficiency of tourism specialists.

## **2. Theoretical aspects of the organization of advanced training of guides**

The purpose of professional development is to provide psychological and pedagogical support to the students in their social self-determination in practical life, professional career in the conditions of dynamic social changes.

In Ukraine, the training of specialists of tourist support (guides) is carried out at the courses of advanced training centers. Depending on the goals and objectives of these courses, students are offered a variety of training programs: long-term and short-term.

Principle tasks of professional development are: education and practical training of a free, functionally competent citizens, capable of cooperation in the interests of the individuals, society and the state; further improvement of the educational process; change of forms and methods of educational work; extensive use of interactive educational and new information technologies.

Today, the content of the professional development of guides embraces the connection between the following aspects: excursion activity, general tourist-recreational, cultural, historical, psychological-pedagogical and local history, which allows the tourist support specialists to organically combine the work of excursion guide, tourist group leader and organizer of excursions [9].

Professional development of specialists of tourist support (guides) is carried out mainly by the block-module courses, which are divided into several special courses.

Each block is considered as a separate special course, the goals and objectives of that are determined by the motive of students' training or a specific request of a tourist-excursion institution.

Generalized analysis of advanced training courses for tour guides in Ukraine showed that the content of the first special course mainly includes such disciplines as general tourism studies, legal bases of tourist activity, as well as the regional component. Students complete training by preparing a business game or presentation. The students are given the homework: to create a model of a tour company, a tour department, to study the touristic potential of a region, excursion objects that allow to create a thematic excursion [9].

The organization and methodology of conducting the first special course is of great importance for increasing the motivation to study. Homework always includes teacher-student collaboration to provide guidance on how to complete the homework.

The second special course is usually held in a month. The main content of it – the study and improvement of the methodology of excursion. The course work starts with presentation of homework. In the process of advanced training different forms and methods of training are offered: analysis of life situations, field trips, study trial excursions and the like. At the end of the course, preparation for the development of a new thematic excursion begins, with further preparation of technological documents, students receive homework.

A month later, students are usually offered a third special course; its main content is related to the professional skills of the guide. The beginning of this special course includes presentation of the prepared homework. To improve the professional skills of the guide and to achieve success, active training methods are used.

So, summarizing all of the above, we can say that block-modular courses existing in our country for professional development of guides provide the opportunity to gain both theoretical knowledge and experience of practical activity and to increase the motive for learning.

### **3. Analysis of professional development programs and retraining programs for guides in Ukraine**

Having analyzed the various study program plans for training and retraining of specialists in tourist guides (guides) in our country, we have made the following general analysis and conclusions, which are presented below.

Courses are held on the basis of higher or secondary vocational education. The curriculum is approximately 300 hours. Duration of study – 3-4 months. Form of study – evening, 3 times a week, practical classes – on weekends. The course program includes the following disciplines: the basics and techniques of conducting excursions, the basics of religious studies, architecture, history, culture and technology of language, the basics of psychology of communication and conflictology. As well as preparing the theme and route of the excursion. Form of knowledge control – exam and test tour.

During the preparation of the following courses:

- 1) study of the theory and practice of excursion;
- 2) formation of a system of theoretical knowledge and practical skills for students to prepare and conduct excursions of different types and for different groups of excursion participants;
- 3) formation of students' complex understanding of the field of organization of excursion service and exhibition activity at the enterprises of tourism and hospitality industry on the example of international and domestic practices.

The main tasks of preparation for professional development courses are as follows: 1) to learn the step-by-step design of the excursion; 2) to master the basic methodological techniques and technology of conducting excursions; 3) to work out the basic methodological techniques and technologies of conducting excursions during practical classes; 4) to promote the formation of professional skills of future employees of the tourism industry; 5) to form skills and to develop technique of transmitting the information during bus excursions [7].

Upon completion of the courses a certificate on the specialty “Tour/excursion guide” is conferred, which gives the right to engage in professional activities.

Professional courses and retraining courses for those who love and are interested in the history, cultural heritage, natural features of their region, as well as for those who are sociable, ready to expand their horizons, continuously update and improve their knowledge and would like to get new a profession that can become a source of both basic income as well as additional income, while combining hobby with work.

The courses provide information on how to select, formulate and effectively communicate their knowledge to a broad audience, select the necessary factual material, prepare individual text of the excursion, using methodological techniques [8].

Further, we consider it necessary to review as an example the typical specialized training courses for guides, which are conducted in one of the regions of Ukraine, namely in Sumy region. These courses were designed for those who love and are interested in the history, cultural heritage, natural features of Sumy and Slobozhanshchyna; for those who are ready to broaden their horizons, to continuously update and improve their knowledge; for those who have a basic higher or secondary education and would like to get a new profession that can be a source of both basic income and additional income, while combining hobbies with work.

Courses include not only mastering theoretical knowledge of the legal framework of tourist activity in Ukraine, local history, excursion methods, pedagogy and psychology basics, but also mastering practical skills and real experience of excursions with different categories of participants, the ability to hold groups attention, as well as how to make excursions unique and informative.

The course students are provided with all the prerequisite for mastering the necessary amount of practical knowledge and skills of the guide, which allows them to realize themselves in the process of communication and to receive daily assessment of their work.

The short course program for guides consists of the following topics [6]:



1. Labor protection;
2. Labor legislation and legal regulation of excursion activities;
3. Basics of excursion and organization of excursion services. Professional mastery of tour guide;
4. Professional ethics and psychology. Fundamentals of conflict in the professional activity of tour guide;
5. Methods of preparation and conduct of excursions: choice of theme; work with sources; historiography; creating a route; technological map of the route; selection of objects; control and individual text of the excursion; methodological techniques and technology for conducting excursions; quality of the excursion, means of its evaluation;
6. Organization of transportation: the classification of the vehicles and their types; choice of transport and legal support of transportation; transport safety;
7. Sumy Region tourist resources and local history: defining cultural monuments, archeology and history of Sumy region and historical events related to them; main stages of settlement and development of Sumy region; founding of the city of Sumy; historical figures; cultural heritage of the region; architecture of Slobozhanshchina;
8. Study of tourist routes of Sumy region;
9. Imitation of excursions with participating students;
10. Final lesson and exam.

Each student prepares the author's excursion and conducts it first in the classroom (virtually) and then in real conditions on the route.

### **Conclusions.**

So, summarizing all of the above, we can draw the following conclusions that our analysis of the training system of guides in Ukraine showed the following: in the courses of training and retraining of specialists in tourist support in Ukraine students can obtain not only theoretical knowledge from the legislative and regulatory framework of tourist activities, local history, excursion methods, pedagogy and psychology basics, but also

practical, real experience of excursions with different categories of participant, ability to hold the attention of the group to act in non-standard situations, and most importantly - how to make a tour the most unique and informative.

We believe that the principle and at the same time the main task of such courses is to help everyone to acquire the necessary amount of practical knowledge and skills of the guide's profession, this unique attractive and prestigious profession, which allows individuals to develop professionally in the process of communication and receive daily evaluation of their work.

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