

# The Development of a Contemporary Model of Professional Tourism Education as a Factor in Overcoming Economic Crisis in Russia

Vasily Gerneshy

Moscow State Institute for Tourism Industry

Moscow, Russia

E-mail: v.gerneshij@yandex.ru

**Abstract**—The article considers the possibility of creating a unified conception of human resources training for the travel industry, which could provide improvement of educational programs quality realization in educational institutions of the tourism industry. The existing educational system for specialists training can increase its efficiency through the planning and realization of an action plan, including multi-regional education projects, which is supposed to be taken as a basis of conception.

**Keywords**—the human resources training; multiregional education project; dynamic development of tourism industry; educational structure; academic mobility of students and lecturers

## I. INTRODUCTION

In modern conditions, the domestic tourism industry is one of the most dynamically developing and upcoming sectors in the service industry, which is able to become the basis of socioeconomic development for all regions of Russia. The processes in the travel industry that we observed during the latest decade, specifically the dynamic development of the travel industry in most parts of Russia, appear to be confirmation of this idea. New hotel complexes, catering establishments, transportation, tourist structures, firms which produce souvenirs, informational and advertising services, and also new institutions of touristic direction, were opened. They form a large, independent, economic complex consisting of industry groups, enterprises, and the people (who, strictly speaking, appear to be the basis of this large mechanism's subsistence) that therein work. All of the touristic clusters were formed in particular regions. In this direction it is especially important to note the Black Sea and North-Caucasian regions. At the beginning of the second decade of the XXI century, it became increasingly clear that Russian tourism was one of the most developing economic branches.

## II. THE FEATURES OF CRISIS IN THE SPHERE OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

As is known, in 2014 a series of bankruptcies defeated a lot of domestic touristic enterprises. According to the specialists' research, this situation was not unexpected. At

first, this situation was conditioned by three, interrelated factors, negatively influencing the touristic sphere. Artificially made economic sanctions in relation to Russia lead to a sharp decline in customer demand in the segment of entry and visiting tourism and low management level in the branch. Essentially economic sanctions played the role of catalyzer, accelerating the revelation of the Russian travel industry's weaknesses. The fact that the management of the branch, by virtue of insufficient professionalism, could not prepare situational, developmental, and objective predictions of the market and duly offer measures of mitigation (prevention) in respect to crises phenomena became the key flaw.

In reality, the travel industry, in comparison with other spheres of economic activity, is rather sensitive to alterations of various factors, including political, social, economic, ecological, ethnical, climatic and other factors that overtly or covertly influence this branch of the economy. However, tourism has one incontestable advantage over other various branches of the economy; tourism, by virtue of its high adaptability to situations, flexibility and variability, recovers and overcomes recessionary situations much faster. Even now we can confidently speak about a certain level of overcoming the recessionary situations in domestic tourism. It is clear that tourism will need some time for pre-depression level achievement.

## III. POSSIBILITIES OF OVERCOMING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY CRISIS VIA THE CONCEPTUAL CHANGING OF PROFESSIONAL TOURISM EDUCATION

However, amendments and additions to legislative rules, taken by State Duma of the Russian Federation in the autumn of 2014, continue to allow excluding cases of unfair rendering services to touristic product consumers, providing a definite level of assurance and protection for a consumer and giving clearer legal and economic mechanisms for the regulation of touristic enterprises.

Therewith, the training of highly professional specialists (managers), who are confidently capable of developing the travel industry and ensuring its economic security, is considered to be the most difficult task under these circumstances.

It is well-known that tourism is both a complex inter-industry and interdepartmental multi-mode system while also simultaneously a unique social phenomenon. It coordinates the needs of human interaction with the development of a person and the mentality of social fairness, environmental protection, and the revival of historic heritage, culture and art. Branch specificity predetermines quality characteristics which are required from its workers; a person must be a creative, competent, moral specialist with a constant aspiration to improve his or her skills. Besides, the given criteria can and must refer to specialists of all levels, from waiter, barman, parlour-maid, guide, to administrators (managers of top echelon) of hotels, restaurants, tourist complexes etc. New educational requirements in the sphere of the travel industry in Russia are thus determined.

In the conception of the long-term socioeconomic development of the Russian Federation for the period until 2020 (order of the government of Russia from 17 of November 2008 № 1662-p) tourism is considered to be a significant constituent of the innovative development of our country's long-term outlook—an economically sound and environmentally safe branch of the national economy. The natural diversity, history and culture of multinational Russia allow the development of practically all types of tourism. However, the great touristic potential of the country is not used in full. According to the World Tourist Organization joint board estimates (UNWTO), Russia is capable of receiving up to 40 million foreign tourists a year and is able to enter in the top 10 ratings of the most attractive from the viewpoint of tourism countries. Changed socioeconomic relations determine that new treatment of travel industry development leads to the severization of touristic specialists qualification requirements. Qualified human resources act as one of the key factors in a business activity's success in the travel industry. In many European countries, organizations working in the sphere of tourism cannot get a license if all of its personnel do not have a special education. "The future of business, economy and government depends on what kind of young specialists will come to our enterprises and to precedence of the country", - said in one of his interviews the chairman of Russian rectors union, rector of MSU named after M.V. Lomonosov Victor Sadovnichy.

The alteration dynamics of the travel industry, including branch calls (which we observe nowadays requires scientific understanding), process substantiation (which takes place in the travel industry), and the creation of touristic human resources with a symmetrical system of professional education.

On one side, knowledge specialization in the travel industry makes the training of touristic human resources work, requiring a serious working out, understanding of thin agreements with educational programs, and long and strong practical training of students. On the other side, development rates of touristic technologies offer the counter challenge--preparing multifunctional workers on the basis of new educational programs, based on a multidisciplinary approach to education in reasonably short terms. Specificity of human resources training for the travel industry is determined by a diversity of knowledge and skills, which every specialist in

this sphere should have. Besides the knowledge of general methodology of travel catering, he should have knowledge of the production method of concrete services-- in other words knowledge of dining service technologies, hotel service technologies, freight service technologies, and tourist sightseeing technologies. Also deep knowledge of and skills with the introduction of informational processes and new technologies across the whole spectrum of offered touristic services are needed. As experience from the latest years showed, it is very important to train a specialist to work in quickly changing economic conditions. These specialists should have the professional competency to work in crisis situations (these competences are especially needed now - in the period of gradual overcoming the crisis) [3].

#### IV. THE PROBLEMS OF RUSSIAN EDUCATION FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY

Staff training is a topical issue, which is very acute for factory managers in the travel industry. Currently we have a situation where graduates of Russian specialized educational institutions do not fully meet the professional requirements of the international standards. It is well known that the modern tourist market, being highly competitive, needs highly professional personnel, able to adapt to rapidly changing conditions, crisis situations in the industry, owning the advanced knowledge, skills and experience, and catching the fast changes of technology industry. In addition to general and special knowledge, employers now expect from the young specialists of the travel industry certain professional competences, for example such obligatory skills as the use of a computer, knowledge of a foreign language, and the ability to work in a group and effectively represent results of own labor and oneself. [1].

The main complaint of employers to educational institutions is the separation of knowledge, obtained by young professionals, from the practice of the travel industry. It can manifest in different ways—from an inefficiency in qualitatively performing official duties and a psychological unpreparedness for the reality of everyday practical activity in the travel industry enterprises, to the management by junior staff and to the norms of behavior in the business environment.

Under these conditions, qualitative implementation of the modern professional tourist education model appears to be one of the actual problems within the travel industry professional institutions. The root of the matter lies in the understanding of qualification requirements and professional competences required by tourism sphere specialists. The contradiction lies in the different representations of the specialist functions of the educational institution's lecturers and employers. According to the experts, the effective implementation of all problem solving variants is possible only with the active participation of the business community in the branch specialists' professional training. The importance of cooperation between the education system and the industry is also confirmed in the report of the European Commission EU, which declared industries as "full partners in the learning process". Unfortunately, the tourist business community, which "consumes" the graduates, did not clearly

formulate the order. The requirements of the travel industry have not been evident for the educational institutions yet. That is why many of our actions toward each other occur spontaneously, and cooperation mechanisms are for the present in the process of development. One can only speak about the effectiveness of the tourism educational system in Russia if the employers act as a qualified customer in the labor and educational services market. The entire structure of the issue as a whole (how many bachelors, magisters should prepare educational institution) should be subordinated to the employer's requirements and finally to the travel industry; that is why multi-variation is a necessity.

Under these circumstances, it can be affirmed that the existing system of specialist's educational training for the tourism enterprises is not effective enough. Experts note a few key issues of personnel training for the travel industry [4]:

- a certain disunion of the professional education content from country and labor market requirements, from world tourist market development tendencies, that evokes the discontent of domestic employers and reduces the competitive ability of human resources training system for travel industry;
- the structure and volume balance violation of the staff training, which does not meet real labor market requirements. One can bring the following: travel industry educational institutions, according to the various estimations, graduate 1,5-2 times more specialists with higher education and 2-3 times less specialists with intermediate vocational education and nonprofessional occupations, than travel industry needs;
- an absence of clearly defined qualifications and also the personnel order quantity for specialists training for travel industry enterprises from the customer side;
- an absence of monitoring the requirements of the travel industry's institutions in regards to specialists of various profiles;
- excessive academicism of higher education placed above the obvious practical skills and knowledge that leads to the significant abruption between branch requirements and offers from the educational institutions side. Higher education does not always quickly react to the arising situations related to the personnel training of the travel industry;
- a significant need for qualified teaching staff, related to the absence of the involvement of travel industry workers in teaching;
- inefficiency of practical and pre-graduation training passing of the students. This is conditioned by the fact that branch enterprises for the most part do not accept specialists and do not give them the possibility to apply their theoretical knowledge in real conditions.

It is evident that it is impossible to provide innovative development and branch competitiveness without radical changes to the staff training system of the travel industry, without providing proper quality and effectiveness, flexibility and dynamism, without correspondence with the labor market, and without general and continuous promotion of human resources professional level.

There is a need for complex scientific investigations in order to create a unified concept of human resources training for travel industry, which would let more qualitatively trained specialists of different levels for work in the travel industry [3]. The basis of the concept should compose the existing educational specialist training system—the effectiveness of which can be advanced by means of planning and realization of the following events:

- analysis of the real market demand for specialists of travel industry;
- content continuity of general, vocational and higher education;
- development and implementation of professional service standards entire system for all subdivisions of travel industry, on the basis of which it is necessary to create educational standards;
- developments of unified qualifications for specialists training in the travel industry sphere;
- modelling of the educational structure and formation of its content by means of educational thematic plans and courses educational programs development, entering into model educational structure of travel industry;
- unity of studied technical, technologic, and other processes, creation of integrated educational courses on their basis;
- replacements of reproductive educational methods by productive and problem-research methods;
- improvement of professional training development and the rational distribution of theoretical and practical trainings towards the growth of the aforementioned;
- qualitative organization of practical training on the enterprises of travel industry;
- mass attraction of travel industry sphere workers to the teaching and training of staff;
- effective use of human resources, material resources of travel industry base enterprise in educational sphere;
- close cooperation with businesses in order to enlarge research investigation networks for knowledge accumulation, innovation, stimulation and the supplying of new technologies for promoting the travel industry market;

- appliance of creative abilities developing efficient modes for the processes of professional orientation formation based on personal values and requirements;
- implementation of the new educational forms (distance learning, net education) and the improvement of already known forms (retraining of licensed graduates, advanced training);
- introduction of travel industry staff training as an obligatory element of students' and lecturers' academic mobility, not only with foreign countries, but also with domestic educational institutions, which will allow for a more penetrative understanding of regional qualification systems and educational results.

Realization of the above mentioned events in modern conditions is effectually accomplished during the educational program's development that will permit taking into account all human resources training peculiarities with the purpose of furthering the efficiency of the travel industry's educational system. In this context, arranging stable and regular academic mobility between the travel industry and educational institutions in Moscow and the Black Sea basin appears to be highly prospective. Besides, this mobility can be not only in the form of a generally accepted exchange between students and lecturers, but also within the framework of joint educational project realization. Realization of large, long-term multi-regional educational project and the required capital (in regards to regional and foreign educational institutions in the Black Sea basin) is considered to be prospective. The Moscow state institute for the tourism industry named after Y.A. Senkevich has experience with similar project realization. Presently, practically oriented educational projects based on personnel training for hotel complexes are successfully realized. The project is realized by the university in collaboration with the German chamber of commerce and industry and the chain of hotels IHG. Four years have passed since the beginning of the project, and it confirmed its high effectiveness on all sides involved with the project. The management of the institute considers the possibility of joint educational project realization with educational institutions in Black Sea basin as the next stage of the project activity's development. We believe that such cooperation can be mutually beneficial for all sides that will permit them to strengthen their positions in the educational field and give them a real competitive advantage.

## V. CONCLUSION

It seems that the project approach can permit the best education of students from several region's educational institutions as a basis for specialists training, thus effectively realizing a pragmatically oriented method of staff training using the accumulated educational potential of these regions. The first step in the direction of the capital educational institutions is the cooperation with regional institutions in the Black Sea basin, which could be the educational programs realization of net form under the law of the RF. According to our estimates, the realization of a multi-regional project

approach in staff training for the tourism sphere, thanks to such uniting social phenomenon as tourism, will give everybody the possibility to overcome crises in a short term.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Aleshin V.A. Modern educational technologies in formation of professional competences of travel industry specialists. Materials of the IX International workshop conference "Topical issues of business - education". Minsk, 2012.
- [2] Bolotov V.A., Serikov V.V. Competence model: from the idea to the educational program. *Pedagogics*. 2008. № 10.
- [3] Gerneshy V.V., Yandovsky A.N. Quality of educational process in educational organization - problems and ways of promotion. Monography. Moscow, 2014
- [4] Pyatkova S.G. Cooperation of university and business-community in innovative system of travel industry professional specialists training. Scientific electronic edition Service in Russia and abroad. 2012. № 5.