

THE ANIMATION – AN ATTRACTION AND /OR A NEED (THE CASE OF COMPANY BVS ENTERTAINMENT LTD.)

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ABSTRACT

Animation industry is constantly presented in each tourism activity. It has the purpose to positively affect the tourists and leave the feeling of exclusiveness, uniqueness and unforgettable memories of the trip. Tourism animation has complex nature – it should affect the tourists to take part in animation events without using any compulsion, bring people together through communication, find, direct and develop various types of talents and abilities among the tourists, and etc. Therefore the problems animator is facing require him/her to have different knowledge and skills which should be successfully applied in a particular case. In a way animator's occupation represents a mixture of the jobs of the teacher, social worker, colleague, friend and all of this should be skilfully combined in one person. Animator should predispose all the tourists, affect them positively, make lots of contacts without neglecting or protecting individuals, be able to entertain and amuse all the tourists in interesting and attractive way. Animator should be able to work in perfect harmony not only with tourists and fellow animators but also with his/her colleagues performing other types of tourism services / accommodation and food / because otherwise a separate animation program could hardly be achieved.

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that animation is no longer an additional service in tourism, but a vital necessity for any tourist complex, providing it with an unique competitive advantage.

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Introduction. In recent years the travel industry increasingly began to refer to tourism animation. Animation problems are comparatively inadequate or underdeveloped in our tourism publications. Perhaps that's why different content very often is put into the term "Animation": for some people it is like the circus show, which is arranged on an irregular basis in the tourist complexes; for others it is a funny evening spent in the company of tourists, at the hotel or restaurant; or it is a sports event on the beach or track; or animation is a funny game or quiz during the trip or event, and etc. The essence of the concept of tourism animation should not be clarified first because of these differences. The essence of the tourism animation could not be considered in complete way without mentioning the close correlation undoubtedly existing between tourism and tourism product, and tourism animation. Considering and analysing only the tourism animation in particular, separated from this factual and logical relationship could not lead to the disclosure of the goals and essence of animation which it sets as a part of the tourism product and tourism. Therefore the object, goals, tasks, ways and means used in this thesis are tied directly to this correlation named tourism-tourism product-tourism animation.

In Bulgaria over the last five years, successful efforts have been made to develop this service. World competition, as well as the stringent requirements of major tour operators such as Thomas Cook, TUI, Iberostar, RIU, require a quick response from our resorts, as animation is a must-have service in major clubs and hotels. It is felt that this service is being sought by tourists and that more and more hotels and clubs are investing resources to develop it. The truth is that gradually Animation will soon become a mandatory requirement for sea resorts, a category of three to five stars, which conclude contracts with the big tour operators.

Tourism and tourism product. In its original sense the word "tourism" means travel and temporary stay of people out of their permanent residence.

The definition of Jean-Louis Barma[2] has similar essence namely: human activities /related to business or other reasons/ during his/her travel or stay out of his/her permanent residence.

A Russian scientist [10] interprets the term examined as temporary relocation of people from the place of their permanent residence in other country or area within their own countries for health, cognitive, job, business, and vacation purposes without occupying a permanent job position in the place to visit. He adds that each person defines separately the tourism essence depending on his/her age, level of education, life experience, marital status, income and other factors. The minds of most people associate tourism with fun, active or passive recreation, entertainment. Later the concept is further developed as tourism means "a trip, a journey which is made in order to get to know own or other countries - their natural beauty, historical and architectural monuments, culture, customs and etc".[7]

Substantially[9], that is a social activity that involves the voluntary movement of people with the following features:

- Tourism is normally considered a free activity although for statistical purposes some forms of unfree activity like pilgrimage or business trips are also referred to as forms of tourism;
- This activity arises out of the permanent residence and work meaning that it includes change of location and escape from the monotonous life;
- Tourism is an activity or state of short duration; the intention is always returning home;
- It is socially-oriented. That means participation in tourism and selection of travel and vacation is affected by social, cultural and demographic features of tourists including age, financial status, level of education and gender.

The term "tourism product" has very broad sense. It covers a very changeable reality which may only include a hotel, a restaurant, a forest or an amusement park, a special event of the type of congress or festival, sports or hobby activity but may include a combination of all of the above-mentioned elements in a global product under the name of tourist trip at a common price. It should also be remembered that the tourism product is often identified by the tourist through the effect expected or notion of this effect. There are many and different participants in its creation and this circumstance requires coordination and integration of efforts and interests of those who create the separate product components.

As a range of services it includes communication between tourists and local population of the site to visit.[12]

As content the term "tourism product" should cover a particular set of consumer values designed to satisfy a certain type of tourism demand. In the view of the nature of consumer values services and products forming the tourism product are classified into several groups: transportation services, services providing accommodation and culinary products in the tourist site, services for organizing tourist entertainment, utility services, production of souvenirs and other goods for consumption in the tourist site. [11]

The tourism product [8] is a result of the tourism industry and represents diverse combination including entertainment used by the tourists, utility services, accommodation, food and transportation and many other goods which are seemingly free of charge and quite often present the reason and purpose for the tourist trip - clean air and water, warm sunshine, safety and peace, creating nice atmosphere and good spirits, beautiful landscapes, architectural and historical sights.

The product of the tourism destination consists of accommodation, food and sports facilities, services and opportunities for providing entertainment and background forming together complete experience of tourists in the given destination. Each of these separate components is important on its own but the overall tourist background and experience is not a simple sum received by them but complete consequence dependent largely on the personal expectations and value ordering during the tourist trip. [1]

Origin and development of tourism animation. Explanation of the term "animation" is related to the etymology of the word and its semantic meaning. Latin words "anima" / soul, life / and "animus" / spirit / stand in its base. Passed from the Latin language to many European languages, animation and its derivatives are interpreted through several meanings which - although in different lights and shades - are too similar in their integrity: to encourage, stimulate, incite, abet, be engrossed in something, inspire someone and etc. Our general lexicology explains the term "animation" with regard to the film production only. The newer term of English origin "entertainment" /fun, amusement/ have become popular lately among the professionals.

Caring for leisure of guests and citizens in the society has been existing since ancient times. Olympic Games held in Ancient Greece amused thousands of visitors. In ancient Rome many public and religious holidays were accompanied by dancing, games and competitions. Magnificent demonstrations of strength and agility, chariot racing, gladiator fights and etc. were organized in the Circus Maximus and the Flavian Amphitheater.

Competitions, dances and rituals for various strata of society were held much later in the Middle Ages, during the knight tournaments and religious holidays. Interest in entertainment,

recreation and sports is a catalyst for the tourism development in the 18th century. After the Second World War tourism developed rapidly but increasingly the tour package containing mainly accommodation, food and transportation did not satisfy the tourist needs. Extra services and entertainment were started and that led to the formation of animation as a private phenomenon in the tourism industry. Naturally animation became a massive factor in attracting tourists and increasing satisfaction rate of needs for movement, sports, knowledge and entertainment. Based on the brief historical retrospect it can be summarized that the rise of animation is related to the changes in the trip reasons and value system of tourists as the need for diversity and activity stimulation are the determining factor here.

Essence and significance of tourism animation. Animation occurred in the 1970s when tourism professionals began to realize that accommodation, food and transportation were already exhausted regarding the clients and other type of entertainment such as holidays, vacations were needed although they are currently basic services. Considerable number of tourism organizations realized the need for these services and in a relatively short period of time they established tourist places in exotic locations offering extra activities - sports and other entertainment.

Animation is an activity that is essentially associated with the tourism services and is a "key" to success for each travel company.

Animation includes most types of tourism services starting from the moment of guest arrival - meeting at the airport, in front of the hotel until their departure. Animation is specially organized activity requiring professional skills. It should be the fruit of the hard work of the whole team of the tourist center, contribute to overcome the barriers to effective communication and more rapid and proper adaptation to the environment.

As a part of the tourism product, animation is currently a special type of service to satisfy the tourist needs and cannot be regarded as an integral part of guide service. From these words we can reach several conclusions to clarify the purposefulness of tourism animation:

- animation covers the inner personal world and the processes of communication between people;
- animation aims at creating prerequisites and conditions for using of tourist leisure according to his/her personal notion and preferences;
- animation is not an amateur demonstration of the individual and as any other activity of the tourism organization it should be managed, regulated, planned and provided with the necessary human, financial, material, natural and information resources;

Modern tourism organizations and tourism policy consider *tourism animation as an purposeful activity of winning tourist clientele*. In respect of content, animation includes two features:

1. Encourage; stimulate tourists to utilize their leisure according to their preferences;
2. Practical implementation of this impulse.

Therefore it can be assumed that *animation is a method of implementing an active and relaxing holiday in terms of meeting the interests and desires of tourists*. Tourism animation is important for tourism product. It enriches it with supply and contributes to combine standardization with its individualization. Namely tourism animation is that phenomenon of tourism of the last few decades through which various tourist needs meet the most successful satisfaction. That is the only activity in the structure and organization of modern tourism which settles matters related to tourist leisure. Here we should look for the reasons for the animation prevalence: meeting the needs of demand it specifically contributes to overcome a gap in the colourful palette of tourism supply. On this basis animation gained increasing significance as an important factor to attract tourists and to increase their level of satisfaction.

The significance of tourism animation can be considered in these aspects:

- economic - animation provides greater tourist attractiveness of tourism destinations, contributes to increasing financial income and improving renown of the tourism organizations;
- social - as a special form of multiculturalism, animation includes elements of achievements of human civilizations: art, traditions, sports and physical activities. Animation is also considered an instrument and form of personal socialization. It has bilateral significance – both for tourists and tourism organization.

Tourist needs can basically be divided into several major groups: need for movement and sports; need for diversity; need for creativity; need for knowledge; need for closer touch with nature; need for communication. Generally animation cannot exist as a concept, it is always targeted to a specific type of clients and its results can only be searched in offering these groups of tourists which it was designated for. Market monitoring by nationality only is not enough because in each of them there are differences related to needs in age, social and marital status; it is also important to know the traditions of different social groups when organizing leisure. Tourists who are related to tourism animation could be divided into several groups:

- tourists looking for comfort - comfort is searched for in all its aspects - accommodation, food, sightseeings. These tourists look for the company of prominent persons and people of varied interests. They insist on being served by competent persons;
- tourists looking for risk - this group of tourists looks for new things and ideas, and prefer individual trips over group ones. They look for risk and create themselves risky situations; they are not interested in accommodation facilities;
- tourists looking for adventure – they strive for any unusual experience and they have similar requirements with tourists looking for risk;
- tourists who want to have something to tell - they visit places attended by any celebrities. They just need to attend the event, no matter where their place is in it.
- After distinguishing tourist attitude to animation we can also determine the types of behaviour among the holidaymakers:
 - socially active tourists with kind soul - these are mainly free people who like walking and communicating with others;
 - tourists looking for recreation – they mainly look for hiking, walking, playing with kids. This group of tourists mostly carry conservative morality;
 - educated tourists, having European pattern of thought - they prefer long standing on the beach, meeting with various countries and cultures, photography, sports, sightseeing and etc.

The research of tourism supply is embarrassed because the fun industry and animation traditions are still under development and there is not enough information accumulated. Animation research should not be confined to the hotel or place facility and should be targeted to the entire social infrastructure in the tourism destination.

After researching the tourist needs for offering the proper type of animation it is needed to know and define precisely the animation product. It represents a combination of features, processes and opportunities which are expected by consumers and will lead to satisfaction of their desires and needs. Animation product is very specific because it satisfies needs and preferences which are changing rapidly. We can conclude here that tourism companies operate in very dynamic environment and they face the problem to sell a product which is exceptional, unpredictable and unique by its nature. Animation product has a life cycle - from the moment we design it and then we look for ways and means for its implementation. It cannot be repeated in the next season. At the moment it is no longer so looked for, in parallel other design should be done. The attractiveness of animation product depends on great number of factors:

- product quality;
- client benefits;
- offering method;
- service staff in the person of any professional animators;
- natural resources.

Each of the factors mentioned affects differently in the tourist decision in accordance with the trip reason. Dynamic environment such as tourism environment forces the tourism organizations to act quickly and according to the client requirements, to make unique and exceptional products, including animation ones. Successful animation is not easy-going and extemporaneous activity, it is subject to certain rules and it is included in the whole strategy of the tourism company. The concept of tourism animation is also reflected in the product pricing and advertising policy. Product policy defines the place and significance of animation in the entire company's product. There are several options here:

- using animation as background - creating friendly and amicable environment. This type of animation is mainly a typical feature of small and medium-sized hotels with individual service;
- piecemeal animation – offering separate, episodic entertainment shows /around the pool, kids animation, evening programs and etc./;
- club animation – unified, based on the tourist needs researched and modern methods of meeting these needs. This type of animation is mainly a typical feature of holiday villages;

The company's pricing policy determines the possible relative share of animation costs in the package price. Animation is reflected in advertising through the company's advertising slogan which is targeted to the guest desires and expectations.

Subject of tourism animation is an activity which is targeted to organizing, managing and implementing the process of satisfaction of certain human needs. But this is a specific process because it is only possible in certain conditions – in the field of tourism. Its content and results are impossible in the dimension of everyday life. There are different ways and means to achieve them: specific forms of leisure organization, proper equipment, original environment, freedom, behaviour opening and etc. Animation cannot be a service because it is contained in the tourism services and it is an integral part of the modern tourism product. Tourism animation faces some *problems*: helping tourists to overcome

uncertainty and fear of new environment, language difficulties, lack of initiative or inability to establish contacts. It is enough for tourists to take part in animation which is offered by the tourist place in order to prove that they are the center of events to become involved in the life of the hotel, restaurant or playground. A properly designed animation program tailored to the specific tourist needs, interests and desires contributes greatly to the formation of high satisfaction with the tourism product. It achieves the expectation excess effect because it offers conditions for showing aptitudes, solving pendent problems, overcoming barriers and complexes. *Tourism animation aims at enriching the content of the tourism product and adding more properties to it. This increases its usefulness and makes it more valuable to its consumers - tourists. In addition to becoming more attractive to traditional clients such product is successfully promoted in other market niches because animation makes it attractive and modern. Therefore tourism product is currently impossible without animation. Tourists arriving at some site, place or country represent the *object of tourism animation*.*

In conclusion, we can summarize: "Tourism animation is a specific activity uniting development and implementation of particular programs for leisure organization. Animation programs include not only sports and competitions, dances, carnivals, games, hobby and activities, but they are also called upon to satisfy higher needs [5].

Specific features of animation can be found in its practical application in tourism. In general this is an activity developed by some enterprise or organization providing tourism services (hotel, resort complex, tour operator, and etc.) which aims at encouraging tourists to active and diverse leisure through taking part in specially designed programs. In respect of content, animation comprises a number of activities which can be grouped into several key fields:

- Field of physical exercises, movement and sports;
- Field of social contacts;
- Field of cultural interests;
- Field of creative interests and aptitudes.

Because of its markedly dominant nature, the above-mentioned fields (especially the first 2) are almost an integral part of each animation concept.

Animation as a process of interpersonal communication provides favourable conditions for creating and coordinating notions of behaviour which is generally approved and socially accepted. Potential resources of animation as a socialisation agent can be revealed through its definition:

- As a process of interaction between individuals, where social positions are not premised and they are currently occurring.
- As an interactive approach provoking children and their parents to manifest themselves actively and learn to accept others with their individual features.
- As an instrument of organizing leisure of mixed groups of children and their parents[6].

In essence, sports animation in tourism represents a "combination of activities aimed at encouraging tourists to active physical exercises and sports, promoting the regenerative body capacity, strengthening its health, performance and psychological status" [4]. It has been established as an extra service of new generation. It provides with attractiveness to the tourism destinations and products. It is a source of high added value, increases competitiveness and financial income and leads to creation of new jobs [3].

As a result of a study commissioned by the European Tourism Commission, [13] which explored the preferences and motivations for tourist trips of tourists from 9 markets visiting Europe, several features and characteristics of the individual segments of visitors were drawn, the common one being that all They are looking for something new and attractive, that is, Animating the time of their stay.

The study covers 9 markets, namely: Europe, USA, Canada, Brazil, Russia, India, Southeast Asia, Japan and Korea (as a common market).

Six types of specialized tourism are studied: cultural, eco, shopping, entertainment, sports and business tourism, and for each market there are distinguished leading motivational clusters, which are preferred types of tourism. As a result, there are two distinct trends, namely: visitors from North America (USA and Canada) visit Europe

Mainly driven by the motive to get to know and explore the cultural heritage, this desire is least pronounced in markets such as Brazil, China and, above all, India. Shopping tourism is a major motivation factor for Chinese tourists in Europe, according to the survey, 4 out of 10 Chinese tourists aim to practice this type of tourism by visiting Europe. This type of tourism is leading and in 22 % of tourists from India, 20 % of tourists from Russia, and 16 % of tourists from Brazil. European markets are less intrigued by this motivation factor, and the least influence it has on

Visitors from North America. The survey also includes a comparative study of motivating factors influencing holiday choice and tourism practice by European tourists and tourists from

North America. The results show that European tourists in America are mainly interested in entertainment, visits to theme and amusement parks, shopping, beach entertainment, recreation and nightlife, while American tourists in Europe are interested in cultural attractions, urban tourism, visits

to nature parks, and Etc. The results of the survey show that European tourists living in European countries practice tourism, mostly cultural and sport tourism (39 %), followed by eco-tourism (25 %) and entertainment (19 %). In addition, they are interested in local cuisine, shrubs, nightlife, attractive cruises, visits to entertainment centers and theme parks. Russian tourists visiting Europe combine leisure with a visit to sporting events or practicing sports tourism (63 %), as well as visits to cultural sites (45 %), eco-tourism (35 %) and entertainment (28 %). They tend to consume more, with accompanying activities being shopping, gastronomy, concerts, spa and a very wide range of additional activities. This also applies to sea tourists whose interests occupy many different niches of service and entertainment.

Canadian tourists visiting Europe are interested in cultural sites (60 %), nature (34 %) and active / sport tourism (29 %). They combine these types of tourism with shopping and visits to amusement parks. For them, outdoor and nature activities are very attractive. Chinese tourists visit Europe, attracted by the opportunity to explore nature (41 %), shopping (39 %), and practicing sports activities (38 %). Attractive for them is nightlife, as well as visiting amusement parks. Tourists from Japan and Korea who visit Europe practice eco-tourism (47 %) and cultural tourism (34 %). At the same time, they are interested in shopping as well as in local cuisine.

Analysis of bvs entertainment ltd. And animation product offered.

1. Company's Analysis.

Company's history. BVS Entertainment Ltd. was registered in the fall of 2008 as a limited liability company. The main business activity is in the field of tourism and in particular: tourism animation. Offering a package product of services related to the tourist leisure organization in hotels which the company is working with. It entered the market with strong start from the very beginning by signing three contracts with hotel complexes and hired 14 employees (animators). To date, after 8 years on the tourism market, the company has signed contracts with 20 hotels and most of them are owned by renowned world and European chains. BVS Entertainment Ltd. currently provides 107 individuals with employment. The significant amount of work made the company readjust its organizational and managerial structure by creating new staff positions for control and monitoring of quality of services offered by the company.

Organizational and managerial structure.

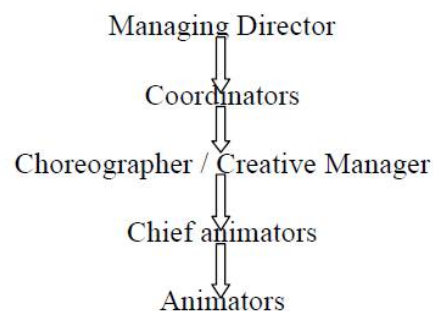


Fig. 1.

From the very beginning the company aimed at offering its clients (hotel complexes) competitive product of high quality, consistent with global trends by satisfying also the most exquisite desires of guests. Managed by young and ambitious people with long-standing work experience in the area of animation, BVS Entertainment Ltd. strengthened the position of reliable partner to its clients. It is no accident that the company signed an exclusive service contract with all RUI hotels (RUI - Spanish hotel chain) which are a synonym for “established quality standard”. The company has also been working since 2010 with the German tourism magnate Der Touristik and in particular with its adjoining hotel brands named LTI Classic, LTI Premium and PrimaSol. Thanks to the company's cooperation with similar partners it also gained occasional reputation outside Bulgaria.

It is common knowledge that the human factor is a major driving force in the tourism industry. Therefore the company strives constantly to improve the skills and knowledge of its employees and it constantly invest in them. In this regard annual in-company training is held for all new employees which are initially performed outside the operating cycle, and then in the course of the work itself. Workshops are usually organized for the management staff twice a year: once before the start of the summer tourist season and after its completion for the second time. They aim at improving their leadership skills and operational management approaches, both to their direct subordinates and to the whole work process. An essential part of these events is also the reporting of results gained and level of satisfaction, both from the clients and their own. Expectations of guests staying at the hotel

complexes towards animation are on the increase each year. Each season the company brings up-to-date the variety of animation services offered in order to satisfy their requirements. What and how to change or further developed is also a topic of discussion during the chief animator workshops because they have the most direct overview of the work process.

Company's mission. One of the goals of *BVS Entertainment Ltd.* is to be the largest animation company in Bulgaria which should also bring the relevant financial profit.

Another goal is to capture the highest market share by building the strongest brand in the market of tourism animation as a product.

The company guarantees loyalty and correctness but accordingly it expects the same from everyone it establishes dealings with. That's why the mission is expressed in the following way: "We would like people who trust us be not just clients but our friends and partners we work with." It is worthwhile to achieve it because soon all of us should form a market society whose striving would not be just to sell and use products but also to exchange values, produce stability and sustainability, integrate distinctions, provide better and creative future for all.

Main trends in the vision. One of the major trends is the introduction of hotel animation as an integral service in each hotel complex striving to offer its clients something more than the standard hotel services.

Company's culture. Client needs should be met with the highest precision. Company's management is also targeted here. Client should not receive just another service but a product emphasizing the specific individual approach.

2. Product Structure Analysis. BVS Entertainment provides the package product named hotel animation consisting of several key services:

- Kids' animation
- Sports animation
- Teen animation
- Evening animation

Subdivision of services of tourism animation offered by the company aims at covering all the age groups of guests of the hotel complexes. All activities and events organized are in accordance with the relevant interests, abilities and preferences of each of them.

- *Kids' animation*

Kids animation covers hotel guests aged between 4 – 12. Kids are the most demanding users when it comes to animation. For this purpose, the kids animators apply a preliminary program including:

- Thematic days;
- Kids' Olympiads;
- Interactive entertainment;
- Kids' shows;
- Kids' discos.

The program is conformable to the equipment of the respective hotel, namely: playgrounds, kids' pool, a specially adapted playground for indoor games (kids' club), and etc.

- *Teen animation*

Teenagers are very specific and demanding contingent especially when we talk about organized entertainment. This program includes all guests aged between 13 - 17. Their program is an original combination between kids', sports and interactive animation.

- *Sports animation*

Sports animation consists of different activities of sports and competitive nature. It is targeted to entertainment and keeping fit and maintaining good health. It is better known as "daily adult animation" because the events are designed for hotel guests over 18 years of age. It consists of team and individual sports games at traditional and world level. There are also games which the hotel guests usually see for the first time:

- Aerobics;
- Yoga;
- Darts;
- Petanque;
- Shuffleboard;
- Rifle and Bow;
- Water gymnastics;
- Water ball;
- Football;
- Volleyball;

- Shulbok

Vast majority of the range of sports activities the company has to offer depends again on the type of base the hotel complex may offer for their conducting. A playground must quite often be readjusted into another one or a sports ground must be reorganized into another one in order to enrich highly the program presented to the guests.

- *Evening animation*

Evening animation consists of:

- Dance shows;
- Comedy nights;
- Musical and artistic shows;
- Moderation games.

Evening animation is targeted to all hotel guests. Some basic rules are observed and that contributes to its high quality: dance shows should be thematic or if not, they should have clear plot and idea, and attractiveness as well. Comedy nights should be in harmony with the entire evening program as the audience laughter is the most important thing here. Banality should be carefully avoided. Musical and artistic shows and moderation games should be tailored to the cultural features of the guest contingent. The main difference in this type of evening animation is that it is not done by the animators on stage but by the tourists who embody in various characters. The proper conduct of each evening show depends on the presence of stage equipped with the appropriate installations and lighting, and a wide range of costumes, makeup and properties.

Conclusions. Tourism animation has significant contribution to the performance of the “face” of the Bulgarian tourism in the world. It acts as a link between tourism and tourism product, enhances tourism supply and thus improves their quality. In Bulgaria the share of tourism organizations offering animation products gradually increases. This is an area which will be developed and improved in the future: the quality of services will be improved, new and attractive activities will be invented, facilities will be modernized.

The final conclusion is: animation is not only necessary for tourists and for the full work of the tourist complex, it also brings a specific financial income.

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