The commitment to strategic communication as a field uniting several related disciplines, such as public relations, marketing communications etc., can be considered an important step forward. I would argue, however, that progress in absolute terms has been disappointing so far. Individual researchers regularly open new avenues of exploration and arrive at answers to questions internally consistent with their respective perspectives. But the body of reasonably verified scientific knowledge that goes substantially beyond common sense remains underdeveloped. What can be done? I argue that for the field to mature, researchers need to work towards a theoretical framework that contains nonrelativistic conjectures about the world which form a nucleus for research to accumulate around. It is necessary to reconnect strategic communication research to the rapidly progressing and highly relevant hybrid disciplines such as cognitive science and evolutionary psychology. In my paper, I will try to show how these disciplines, especially evolutionary psychology, can underpin theory-building in strategic communication.

Bio
Dr. Howard Nothhaft is Assistant Professor at the Institute for Strategic Communication at Lund University, Sweden, Campus Helsingborg. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Leipzig, Germany, with a shadowing-study of communication managers which received an EUPRERA award of excellence. His main interests are in the area of communication strategy and he recently works on the question on the impact of strategic communication on democracy. He has published book chapters and articles on a variety of topics connected to public relations

Further info:

Background paper:
DOI: 10.1080/1553118X.2015.1124277