

## *Last fall, at a Wall Street analyst briefing held by Keane inc.,*

one of Keane's guest speakers found himself cornered by a blockade of analysts as he stepped down from the gathering's podium.

Atul Vashistha had just completed a 30-minute presentation when nearly three rows of analysts vacated their seats and attempted to approach him one-by-one. The presentation — on what Vashistha calls the globalization of the technology

professional services industry — apparently hit a nerve with Wall Street's professional services number crunchers.

"The fortunes of companies like Accenture, Keane, and IBM are today greatly tied to their success offshore. They see our company now as having a six- to 12-month look into the market's future," says Vashistha, whose mob appeal is perhaps linked to his willingness to speak in consulting work price points and profit margins.

As CEO of neoIT, the offshore advisory and management firm based in San Ramon, CA, Vashistha approaches Wizard of Oz-like status with business and Wall Street observers for his vision and influence in the offshore outsourcing market. With 75 offshore outsourcing transactions under his belt valued at \$1.5 billion and having nearly doubled his firm's own revenues in fiscal 2003, the 38-year-old has the goods to back it up.

Vashistha cofounded neoIT in 1999 after traveling around the world as senior VP of global business development for Cardinal Health Inc., Dublin, OH, a \$50.5 billion provider of products, services, and technologies for the healthcare industry. He began noticing the growing IT knowledge base of workers in India, Russia, the Philippines, and other countries, and knew that cheap labor in those countries could save U.S. businesses money.

At first, the team tried producing software that would help a firm buy services and manage them worldwide. But they later realized that clients were looking for expertise, not technology and tools.

NeoIT then took off as a consulting firm that helps global 2000 companies develop an outsourcing strategy, find sourcing options, and manage offshore work. Today, neoIT's marquee clients include JP Morgan, Procter & Gamble, Dupont, and ExxonMobil.

Vashistha also finds himself center stage as the election season reaches full swing and deployment of U.S. jobs offshore becomes a major election issue.

He points out that jobs lost to offshore outsourcing represent a very small portion of unemployment in the last two years, citing statistics by the Bureau of Labor which say that of the three million jobs lost, no more than 50,000 went offshore. "But in an election year ... people use this as a flag," he says. "Outsourcing keeps companies competitive. ... We continue to do higher-value work here. Typically, initially it's the lower-value work that goes offshore."

There's no doubt that the offshore outsourcing train has left the station and is gaining steam. Vashistha has taken his place as conductor. — Stacy Collett

